NATION

More rains lead to closure of 338 roads in Himachal

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BUSINESS

Bharti to buy 24.5% stake in UK's largest BT broadband firm

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SPORTS

Tom Cruise transfers flag to LA for 2028 games

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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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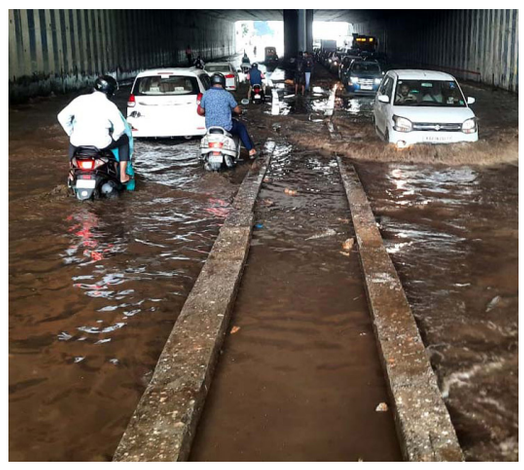
6 HOURS OF RAIN TURNS CITY ROADS INTO DRAINS

Techies fume as B'luru faces waterlogging with just 74mm rain



Deputy Chief Minsiter DK Shivakumar visits people injured after a tree falls on them, in Bengaluru, on Monday; Underpasses near Jayadeva Hospital and Devinagar face water logging after rains lash City ***PHOTOS: MOHAMMED ASAD***

BENGALURU, 12 AUG

Bengaluru woke up to widespread chaos on Monday morning after heavy overnight rain caused significant flooding and tree falls across the city.

Four children among six people, who were injured due to a tree fall at Jaibharath Nagar at 8.20am, were admitted to TriLife Hospital in Kalyan Nagar on Monday. Two families were taking their children to school, one family on a motorcycle and another family on foot when the tree fell on them at Jaibharath Nagar, reports said.

Dr Shafiq AM, CEO and Co-Founder, Trilife Hospital said, "The children aged 7, 10, 12 and 13 suffered minor injuries and are getting better. The male patient aged 37 is receiving ICU care and the female aged 45 has a fracture of femoral bone and was taken up for surgery." Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said a medico-legal case for negligence will be filed against officials of Forest Department with Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) and he instructed the officials to foot the medical bills for the treatment.

According to India Meteorological Department, Bengaluru received 74mm of rainfall from 2am to 8.30am on Monday. The highest rainfall in the City was recorded in Kodgehalli at 61.5mm, while VV Puram, Vidyapeeth, Nayandahalli, Hagadur and Rajarajeshwari Nagar also witnessed heavy showers.

Many techies were angry with City's infrastructure going for a toss after the rains despite them paying lakhs of rupees to BBMP as property tax. Mahadevapura Zone, a region already known for its vulnerability to floods, once again bore the brunt of the downpour. "Our cars and vehicles were submerged and we could not even start the vehicles," said Satish Kumar, a techie staying at Kadugodi who was on the way to Manyata Tech Park, Whitefield, told Salar News.

Slow-moving traffic was reported at Silk Board Junction, Wind Tunnel Road, Bannerghatta Road, Jayadeva Underpass and Outer Ring Road, among others. Waterlogging was reported at Chickpet Metro Station, Shanti Nagar Bus Terminus , KR Market and Dasanapura APMC.

Bengaluru traffic police and BBMP cleared the waterlogging in parts of the City. Shivakumar visited some of the rain-affected and said: "If water has entered apartments and houses, let's rectify it. We want the groundwater levels to increase."

BBMP officials told Salar News, "We have visited the flood-affected areas with the Bengaluru Development Minister and we will follow as per his instruction."

Bengaluru South MP and BJP leader Tejasvi Surya said the waterlogging and flooding in Bengaluru, after a few hours of rain in the early morning, once again exposed the absence of municipal leadership in the City. *—Salar News*

K'taka: Excess rains kill 58, damage 80,000 ha crops

BENGALURU, 12 AUG

Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda on Monday said that the State has recorded 58 deaths and crop damage in 80,000 hectares, due to "above normal" rains so far in the current monsoon season so far.

More rains are anticipated in several parts of the Atate in the days ahead, and officials have been instructed to take precautionary measures, he said.

"In the northern interior region, the average rainfall has been 260 mm, but this year it has received 322 mm, which is 24 per cent higher than normal. The Malnad region typically receives 1,127 mm of rainfall, but this year it has received 1,361 mm, 21 per cent higher than normal.

Speaking to reporters here, he said that last month there was a rainfall deficit in the dryland regions and districts like Kolar, Chikkaballapur, Yadgir, Koppal, Vijayapura and Raichur had received less rainfall than usual. However, good rainfall has been recorded in these areas over the last 10 days. Noting that the monsoon will continue for another one-and-a-half months, and more rain is expected in the coming days, especially in the regions from Bengaluru to Central Karnataka and the Malnad area, the minister said heavy rainfall is likely along the Karnataka-Maharashtra border and the Krishna and Cauvery river basins. A crucial meeting on this matter will be held under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday. In the current rainy season, 1,126 houses have completely collapsed, while 75 unauthorised houses have also collapsed, Gowda said.

—PTI

Markets close lower amid Hindenburg, Sebi & Adani row

MUMBAI, 12 AUG

Stock markets closed marginally lower in highly volatile trade on Monday as gains in private banks helped benchmark Sensex recoup some of the early losses inflicted by allegations against Sebi chief Madhabi Puri Buch and her husband by the US short-seller Hindenburg Research. The 30-share Sensex closed lower by 56.99 points or 0.07 per cent at 79,648.92 with 18 of its constituents ending with losses and 12 with gains. The index had declined by 479.78 points to a low of 79,226.13 in morning trade due to losses in Adani group shares. *—Salar News*

>>>More on Pages 3 & 7

IT'S A WRAP UP

India's flag-bearers men's hockey team goalkeeper PR Srejeesh and shooter Manu Bhaker during the closing ceremony of the 2024 Summer Olympics at Stade de France, in Paris, France ***PHOTO: PTI*** *>>>More on Page 8*

Govt withdraws draft of broadcasting services bill

NEW DELH, 12 AUG

The government is likely to reconsider the contentious provisions of the Broadcasting Services Regulation Bill that had raised concerns among online content creators as it sought to club them with OTT or digital news broadcasters.

This comes after the Opposition alleged that a revised version of the draft was "secretly" given to a few select stakeholders.

The Bill was released for consultations in November last year and a fresh draft was circulated among select stakeholders for their views.

An official said that the government may be open to reviewing certain clauses of the Bill as it had drawn sharp reactions from a section of media representatives.

The ministry further said that additional time is being provided to solicit comments and suggestions till 15 October. A fresh draft will be published after detailed consultations, it said.

According to some reports, the draft bill seeks classify Instagram influencers and Youtubers as "digital news broadcasters" to define their userbase.

It has been reported that these digital news broadcasters will be separate from OTT broadcasting services and registered digital media. The first draft of the bill had already proposed that OTT platforms, which have the freedom to create any kind of content, will be bound by a programme code.

The content creators reportedly will be required to notify the government of their presence within a month of the enactment of the legislation. This provision is also likely to apply to any account sharing news irrespective of follower count.

—Agencies

6 WOMEN AMONG 7 DEAD IN BIHAR TEMPLE STAMPEDE

JEHANABAD, 12 AUG

At least seven people, including six women, were killed and 16 others injured in a stampede at Baba Siddheshwar Nath Temple in Bihar's Jehanabad district, an official said on Monday.

The deceased are Pyare Paswan,30; Nisha Devi,30; Unam Devi, 30, Nisha Kumari, 21 and Sushila Devi, 64. The identity of one woman remains unknown, the official added.

District Magistrate (DM) Alankrita Pandey confirmed the fatalities and injuries, stating that the stampede took place at the temple around 11.30 pm on Sunday. She noted that security personnel at the temple quickly brought the situation under control.

"Seven people, mostly kanwariyas, were killed and 16 others injured in a stampede at Baba Siddeshwar Nath temple in Barabar Pahadi area of Jehanabad around 11.30 pm on Sunday. The deceased included six women", she told PTI.

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar expressed grief over the incident and instructed that an ex gratia of Rs 4 lakh each be provided to the families of the deceased. The Chief Minister also directed the district administration to ensure the best possible treatment for the injured.

The injured were taken to medical facilities in Mukundapur and nearby areas, with 10 discharged after first aid and six still hospitalised. Senior officials from the district administration and police are stationed at the temple due to the high volume of pilgrims.

Pandey said security personnel deployed brought the situation under control.

The DM indicated that a dispute among kanwariyas might have led to the stampede. The exact cause is still under investigation, and an inquiry has been ordered, officials said. *—PTI*

NIMHANS doctors protest against the rape of a Kolkata doctor, in Bengaluru, on Monday; Inset: Accused Sanjay Roy ***PHOTOS: MOHAMMED ASAD/X***

Kolkata doctor's rape triggers nationwide strike

NEW DELHI/KOLKATA, 12 AUG

Resident doctors of government hospitals across the country went on an indefinite strike on Monday to protest the recent rape and murder of a trainee doctor in Kolkata, paralysing elective services including OPDs and non-emergency surgeries.

The move comes in response to a call from the Federation of Resident Doctors' Association (FORDA) which said the "strike won't stop unless justice is served and our demands are met".

According to the FORDA, during the indefinite strike, outpatient departments, operation theatres, and ward duties will be shut, but emergency services will continue to operate as usual. In the national capital, junior doctors from multiple hospitals, including centrally-run facilities AIIMS, RML Hospital and Safdarjung Hospital, began strike in the morning, causing hardships to patients who visited out-patient departments of the medical facilities only to be returned without any consultation. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

Retail inflation slips to 5-yr low of 3.54% in July

NEW DELHI, 12 AUG

Retail inflation declined to a five-year low of 3.54 per cent in July mainly on account of subdued prices of food items, and base effect, according to official data released on Monday.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) based retail inflation was 5.08 per cent in June 2024 and 7.44 per cent in July 2023.

Retail inflation slipped below the median target of 4 per cent of the Reserve Bank of Inida (RBI) for the first time since September 2019 when it was at 3.99 per cent. The government has tasked the RBI to ensure inflation remains at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side. Inflation has remained below 6 per cent since September 2023.

According to the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), the annual inflation in 'milk and milk products' was 2.99 per cent, 'oils and fats' (-) 1.17, fruits 3.84 per cent, and spices (-) 1.43 per cent.

The CPI Inflation in the food basket was 5.42 per cent in July, down from 9.36 per cent in June, and 11.51 a year ago.

Inflation was more than the national average in rural India at 4.1 per cent while in urban areas it was 2.98 per cent. The highest inflation was in Bihar at 5.87 per cent and the lowest in Jharkhand at 1.72 per cent. *—PTI*

'Bangladesh violence more political than communal'

AMINA AFAQ
BENGALURU, 12 AUG

In the wake of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina's ouster due to a student-led uprising, reports in India claimed that Hindu minorities were being targeted by Muslims. The reports also claimed that the student-led protests were spearheaded by Islamist factions such as Jamaat-e-Islami.

When Salar News reached out to Alisha (name changed), a resident of Bangladesh, she claimed that while attacks on minorities did occur, the scale of violence reported by Indian media has been grossly exaggerated. "Bangladesh students look at the Indian news channels and wonder why the neighbouring nation is running hate propaganda against them," she said on the condition of anonymity. Hindus constitute about 8 per cent of Bangladesh's 170 million people and support the Awami League, which is viewed as secular compared with the Opposition coalition, which includes Jamaat-e-Islami. "The attacks happened for two days but were stopped as Muslim students came out on the streets and sat in front of temples to protect them," She added. Contrary to claims of a widespread anti-Hindu campaign, Dhaka Tribune reported that both Muslim and Hindu citizens rallied to safeguard the religious sites. *—Salar News*

Students sit outside a temple in Bangladesh ***PHOTO: X***

>>>Continued on Page 4

IIT-MADRAS BEST INSTITUTE

IISc named best university for 9th time

NEW DELHI, 12 AUG

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras remained on the top spot in the National Institute Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2024 for the sixth consecutive year, while the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru was ranked as the best university for the ninth year in a row, according to the Ministry of Education.

Delhi University improved its rank from 11 to 6 while Hindu College stalled Miranda College's seven-year run as

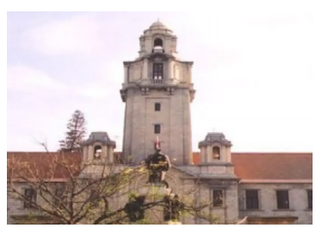


PHOTO: PTI

the best college in the ninth edition of the NIRF rankings, which was announced by Union Minister of Education Dharmendra Pradhan on Monday. Behind IIT Madras, IISc Bengaluru took the second spot in the "overall" category, followed by IIT Bombay while IIT Delhi. Eight IITs figured in the top ten besides All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi and the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU).

Among universities, IISc Bengaluru is followed by JNU and Jamia Millia Islamia.

Nine IITs are in the top ten list for engineering colleges with IIT Madras being at the top for the ninth consecutive year in the category. IIT Delhi and IIT Bombay also retained their second and third spot respectively in the category. National Institute of Technology (NIT), Tiruchirapalli is the only non-IIT in the top ten list.

Knowing the quality, performance and strengths of an academic institution is a right of students and parents, the education minister said after the rankings were announced.

Among management colleges, IIM Ahmedabad retained its top spot for fifth year in a row, followed by IIM Bangalore and IIM Kozhikode. *—PTI*

Lalbagh flower show: BMRCL offers return tickets

BENGALURU, 12 AUG

To ease travel for people attending the Lalbagh Flower Show, Namma Metro has announced paper ticket system. These tickets will replace the usual tokens and are valid for travel from Lalbagh Metro Station to any other metro station on the day of purchase. Unlike tokens, which are deposited at the station, these paper tickets can be taken to the venue. On 15, 17, and 18 August, passengers travelling to and from Lalbagh Metro Station will be offered a return journey paper ticket for Rs 30, available through cash transactions. From 10am to 8pm the tickets can be purchased at Lalbagh Metro Station. It aims to streamline commuting during the peak period of the flower show, reducing potential delays and congestion. *—Salar News*

No changing date of birth after retirement: HC

BENGALURU, 12 AUG

High Court ruled that an employee cannot change the recorded date of birth after retirement. The case involved a man who worked at a pulp drawing processor manufacturing unit from 1983 until he retired in 2006. When he was hired, he verbally gave his date of birth as 30 March, 1952, but didn't provide any proof. The employer, however, recorded his date of birth as 10 March, 1948, based on his provident fund details and a school certificate. This meant he retired at 58 in 2006. After retirement, the man obtained a birth certificate showing 30 March, 1952, as his date of birth. He then asked to be reinstated or be eligible to receive benefits up to 2010, arguing he should have retired four years later. *—PTI*

Murder accused hacked to death in Mangaluru

MANGALURU, 12 AUG

A gangster, Mohammed Shameer, 35, was murdered by a five-member gang in Mangaluru's Kallapu on Sunday. Shameer was a key accused in the 2018 murder of Target Ilyas, a notorious rowdy-sheeter. The incident occurred as Shameer stepped out of his car at a restaurant with his family. The assailants, armed with lethal weapons, attacked him, causing fatal injuries. Shameer was the key accused in the 2018 murder of Ilyas a rowdy sheeter who was killed in an apartment by a gang comprising of Dawood, Shameer, Riyaz, Namir, Abdul Khader, Umar Nawaf, Mohammad Nazir, Naushad, and Asghar Ali. Shameer Shameer was a resident of Ullal Kadappura and was recently released from prison. Police have formed special teams to apprehend the assailants who are on the run. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: SALAR

Women protesters demand bank elections in Kolar

KOLAR, 12 AUG

A unique protest unfolded in Kolar today as members of the Women's Wing of Kolar District Ryot Sangha took to the streets, carrying bricks on their heads. The demonstrators demanded immediate elections to the executive body of the Kolar Chikkaballapur District Cooperative Bank, in line with a Karnataka High Court directive. The protestors, led by Nalini Gowda, accused the district administration of inaction despite the court's order. The State has appointed an administrator to the bank, despite this the banking activities have taken a standstill and the authorities have failed to provide financial assistance to the women and farmers of Kolar district she alleged. The lack of financial assistance, they alleged, has adversely affected agriculture and dairy activities. *—Salar News*

Hospital services hit over resident doctors' strike

Doctors want reduction in college fees, increase in stipends

BENGALURU, 12 AUG

The non-emergency services at government hospitals in Bengaluru were disrupted as resident doctors began an indefinite strike on Monday demanding reduction in medical college fees and increase in stipend.

The non-striking, visiting doctors at government hospitals such as KC General Hospital, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Medical College and Research Institute, Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology, Sanjay Gandhi Institute of Trauma & Orthopaedics Centre and Indira Gandhi Institute of Child Health Hospital were under pressure on the day to carry out the tasks.

An ophthalmologist from a government hospital in Jayanagar said, "We have been receiving 600 patients for eye check-up every day. On Monday, only three-four doctors were there to oversee them since around eight resident doctors didn't turn up."

When Salar News spoke to a couple of patients affected due to the strike, a few of them said they would support the doctors for their rights and the government should take care of medical professionals also. "We will wait for the main doctors to give us a treatment," a patient who turned up at a government hospital said.

In a government hospital, the waiting time for non-emergency services ranges from one hour to three hours depending on the patients count per day. Due to the strike, the wait was extended to additional two to three hours. A visiting doctor from a government hospital in the City said, "Now I have to be present at the labour rooms to keep an eye on patients and also manage the treatment of the patients as we are working under pressure."

Speaking to Salar News, Dr Sirish Shivaramaiah, President of Karnataka Association of Resident Doctors, said, "The strike is meant to show the impact of the missing of resident doctors on government hospitals. We are the backbone of medical system and the government should consider paying us more instead of ghosting us saying that the decision is on the way." *—Salar News*

Resident doctors protest demanding hike in stipend during protest at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Monday *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

> **We are the backbone of medical system and the government should consider paying us more instead of ghosting us saying that the decision is on the way**
>
> -Sirish Shivaramaiah, President of K'taka Association of Resident Doctors

FLOOD THREAT LOOMS

Tungabhadra Dam gate repair underway

BENGALURU, 12 AUG

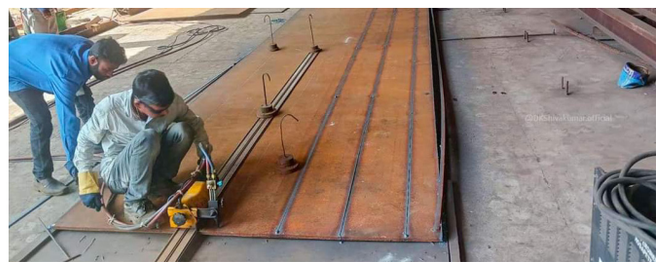
Deputy Chief Minister and Irrigation Minister DK Shivakumar has announced the commencement of repair work on the damaged crest gate of the Tungabhadra Dam.

To facilitate the repair process, the water level in the reservoir needs to be lowered, he said.

Shivakumar, who visited the site, has roped in Jindal Company and other stakeholders to expedite the repair work. He assured the public that technicians are working round-the-clock to restore the dam to its optimal condition.

Addressing concerns about accountability, he clarified that the immediate priority is to ensure the safety of the dam and support farmers. Investigations into the cause of the damage will be initiated once the repair work is underway. The government is also working towards closing the crest gate to conserve water for agricultural purposes, but this can only be done after the water level is reduced.

Amidst criticism from former chief minister HD Kumaraswamy about issues at the KRS dam, Shivakumar dismissed the allegations as politicisation. He emphasised that the government has constituted a Reservoir Safety Committee to assess all dams in the State and assured farmers that there is no cause for alarm. *—Salar News*



The government is also working towards closing the crest *PHOTO: SALAR*

Special postcards released to honour Indian Olympians

The postcards featuring Manu Bhaker and Neeraj Chopra are available at Bengaluru Post Office, in Belagavi, Mangaluru and Mysuru *PHOTOS: SALAR*

BENGALURU, 12 AUG

Karnataka Postal Circle has unveiled a set of commemorative postcards featuring Indian medal winners in a tribute to India's sporting excellence at Paris Olympics 2024.

The launch of the postcards, which was part of 'Har Ghar Tiranga 2024' campaign, took place at Sandesha Museum of Communication on Museum Road here on Monday. The celebrations began with a heritage walk at 9 am, starting from Mail Motor Service building in Vasanthnagar, according to a statement by Karnataka Postal Circle. Organised to coincide with Independence Day, the walk, which also covered landmarks such as Beaulieu at Palace Road and Bengaluru General Post Office, concluded at Sandesha Museum.

Speaking to **Salar News**, S Rajendra Kumar, Chief Post Master General of Karnataka Circle, said, "In our country, we do not give as much importance to sports as we do to academics. This initiative reflects our commitment to celebrating and honouring India's sporting prowess and achievements despite all the hardships in that field."

- The celebrations began with a heritage walk at 9 am, starting from Mail Motor Service building in Vasanthnagar, according to a statement by Karnataka Postal Circle. Organised to coincide with Independence Day, the walk also covered landmarks such as Beaulieu at Palace Road

The ceremony was also attended by Pramila Gudanda Aiyappa, an Indian heptathlete who represented India in 2000 and 2008 Summer Olympics. The postcards are available for purchase at Bengaluru General Post Office, as well as at the head post offices in Belagavi, Mangaluru and Mysuru. Sandesha Museum will also host a philatelic exhibition showcasing Olympic-themed stamps until 31 August. This exhibition, which will also have collections of by philatelist Jaganath Mani and President of Philatelic Society of India Col Akil Kumar, is open to visitors from 9.30am to 5 pm daily. *—Salar News*

FIGHTING FOR THE RIGHTS

Members of Karnataka State Primary School Teachers Association demand promotion for senior teachers on their seniority during their protest at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Monday *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

New bylaws to tackle problem of illegal hoardings in B'luru

BENGALURU, 12 AUG

The city civic body Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) on Monday informed the High Court that the State has approved new bylaws aimed at combating the problem of illegal hoardings and flex banners in the city.

Named the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (Advertisement) By-laws 2024, the regulations include provisions for penal action against violators.

BBMP has invited public objections to the by-laws before they are notified.

The update was presented to a bench comprising Chief Justice NV Anjaria and Justice KV Aravind, during the hearing of a suo motu public interest litigation (PIL) concerning the issue of unauthorised hoardings in the city.

PHOTO: PTI

In a hearing on July 12, the court had highlighted a report stating that over 6,00,000 illegal advertisements and hoardings were recently removed by municipal authorities in the city.

The court warned both the Municipal Commissioner and the Bengaluru Police Commissioner that they could face contempt proceedings if they failed to enforce the court's orders on removing illegal hoardings.

During Monday's hearing, the court emphasised the need for better coordination between civic authorities and the city police in executing its directives.

The High Court noted that the new by-laws should include strict penalties to deter violations and require continuous monitoring to prevent the recurrence of illegal hoardings, especially during the monsoon season when such installations could pose additional hazards. *—PTI*

I'm a strong aspirant for Channapatna bypolls: BJP MLC

BENGALURU, 12 AUG

BJP MLC CP Yogeshwara on Monday said he was a strong ticket aspirant for Channapatna Assembly bypolls and expressed hope that his party leadership along with alliance partner JD(S) will field him as their joint candidate.

He said in case he fails to get a ticket, he will contest as an Independent, and wants to be back in the NDA fold later.

The JD(S) joined BJP-led NDA in September last year, and the two parties contested the recent Lok Sabha polls in an alliance.

Channapatna bypoll is necessitated as the seat fell vacant following the election of its representative, JD(S) leader and now Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy, to Lok Sabha.

The byelection schedule is yet to be announced by the Election Commission.

"I'm also a strong aspirant for the Channapatna bypolls. Kumaraswamy and I have been traditional rivals politically", he told reporters here, noting that he was JD(S) leader's "closest opponent" in the 2023 Assembly polls. "There have been 10,000-15,000 votes difference in every election, so it's my claim that the seat vacated by him should be given to me." Kumaraswamy's actor-turned-politician son Nikhil Kumaraswamy's name is also doing the rounds. Nikhil had lost the 2023 Assembly polls from neighbouring Ramanagara Assembly segment.

Indications are that either Shivakumar or his brother DK Suresh, a former Congress MP who lost from Bangalore Rural Lok Sabha segment, may be fielded in Channapatna.

BJP central leadership has reportedly asked Yogeeshwara to come to New Delhi.

Yogeeshwara said he is confident that Kumaraswamy will agree to give him the ticket. *—PTI*

WORLD ELEPHANT DAY

CM bats for saving elephants' natural habitat

BENGALURU, 12 AUG

Preserving the natural habitats for the elephants will reduce the human-elephant conflicts that we are witnessing at an alarmingly high rate, said Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday.

He was speaking after inaugurating an international conference that coincides with World Elephant Day.

The two-day conference on human-elephant conflict management, which aims to tackle the increased human-elephant conflicts, was organised by the Forest department.

The conference will see Forest Department officials from across India sharing knowledge with academic researchers and civil society organisations to bring about evidence-based inclusive approaches to human-elephant conflict solutions.

Siddaramaiah during the inaugural ceremony of an International Conference on World Elephant Day *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

At the inaugural event, Siddaramaiah said State particular is susceptible to increased human-elephant conflicts it has the highest elephant population with 6,395 elephants, which makes approximately 25 per cent of the nation's total elephant population.

- Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar has flagged that there is the urgent need for expert-driven strategies to mitigate human-elephant conflicts, which have become a significant issue

"In the last 10 years, the State reported 2,500 incidents of human-elephant conflicts, resulting in over 350 human fatalities and substantial crop losses," he said.

"As climate change raises temperatures and changes rainfall patterns, resources become even more scarce and elephants get pushed into new areas, including communal lands. Humans face their own challenges as they must move deeper into elephant territory to collect water or firewood," said Siddaramaiah.

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar has flagged that there is the urgent need for expert-driven strategies to mitigate human-elephant conflicts, which have become a significant issue in Karnataka.

Speaking at an international conference on human-elephant conflict held at GKVK, Bengaluru, he highlighted the frequency of such conflicts in his constituency and across the State, urging experts to devise actionable plans to prevent the loss of lives. *—Salar News*

Residents of deforested regions to get insurance

BENGALURU, 12 AUG

State Forest, Ecology and Environment Department is likely to introduce an insurance policy for people living in deforested areas. During an international conference on 'Human-Elephant Conflict Management', Forest, Ecology and Environment Minister Eshwar Khandre said, "I have been discussing with the experts to explore the possibility of providing insurance to residents who face heightened risks due to deforestation and wildlife encroachment."

The insurance policy aims to address the risks associated with deforestation and wildlife encroachment by including provisions for the evacuation of affected residents. This initiative is part of a broader strategy to mitigate the impact of environmental changes and ensure the safety of communities living in vulnerable areas.

This decision comes after the minister held a meeting with farmers affected by the conflict during the conference, where Khandre responded to proposals aimed at mitigating the dangers posed by elephants. These proposals included reducing the elephant population in conflict zones, constructing elephant ditches, and installing tentacle fencing, solar-powered fences and railway barricades.

A suggestion was made to feed elephants within the forest with crops such as sugarcane and jackfruit to prevent them from entering human settlements. However, experts advised against this approach, warning that cultivating such food sources could lead elephants to associate human areas with food, potentially worsening the conflict. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: PTI

ED attaches ₹122 cr worth assets of Haryana Cong MLA

NEW DELHI, 12 AUG

More than 100 acres of agricultural land and other immovable assets worth about Rs 122 crore of Haryana Congress MLA Surender Panwar, former INLD legislator Dilbag Singh and some other individuals have been attached under the anti-money laundering law in an alleged illegal mining case, the Enforcement Directorate said on Monday. "All these properties are registered in the name of people and entities, running a syndicate managed and controlled by Dilbag Singh and Surender Panwar, who indulged in large-scale illegal mining of sand in Haryana," the central agency said in a statement. Singh and Panwar, Congress legislator from the Sonipat assembly seat, were raided and arrested by the ED recently in this case. *—PTI*

HC to hear plea against exclusion of Sec 377 in BNS

NEW DELHI, 12 AUG

The Delhi High Court on Monday agreed to hear a plea challenging the exclusion of any provision in the new penal law, Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS) relating to punishment for the offence of 'unnatural sex' and 'sodomy'. The plea was mentioned for urgent listing before a bench of Acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela which said it would be heard on Tuesday, if in order by afternoon. The lawyer submitted that BNS excludes any provision equivalent to Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) due to which every person, especially LGBTQ community, will be affected. Section 377 of IPC punishes non-consensual unnatural sex between two adults, sexual activities against minors and bestiality. BNS, which replaced Indian Penal Code (IPC), came into force from 1 July, 2024. *—PTI*

After Marathas' ire, Sharad meets community leaders

PUNE, 12 AUG

Members of a Maratha organisation on Monday met with NCP (SP) leader Sharad Pawar at his residence in Pune and asked him to clear his stand on the quota issue, a day after protesters stopped the SUV of the veteran politician in Solapur district and shouted slogans during his rally. Reacting to the meeting between Maratha Kranti Thok Morcha leader Ramesh Kere Patil and Pawar, quota activist Manoj Jarange alleged Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and other leaders of BJP were trying to project a rift in the Maratha community. He dubbed Kere Patil's meeting with Pawar a "trap" to divide Marathas. *—PTI*

Take Muslims into confidence on Waqf Bill: Sena

JALNA, 12 AUG

Shiv Sena MP Sandipan Bhumre and other leaders of the ruling party have stressed on a consensus and taking the Muslim community into confidence before any amendment is made to the Waqf Act. The Bill, which seeks to amend the law governing waqf boards, has proposed far-reaching changes in the present Act, including ensuring the representation of Muslim women and non-Muslims in such bodies. The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on Thursday and referred to a joint committee of Parliament with government asserting the law did not intend to interfere with the functioning of mosques. Shiv Sena leader a Arjun Khotkar highlighted the need for a careful deliberation before any changes "Waqf means properties donated by Muslims for the welfare of the community," he said. *—PTI*

Hindenburg row: Congress to protest if JPC probe denied

BJP says Cong wants market to crash; calls demand sham

T'PURAM, 12 AUG

Stepping up its attack on the Narendra Modi government over Hindenburg Research's allegations against SEBI chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch, Congress party on Monday threatened to launch a nationwide protest if its demand for a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) probe into the matter is not accepted.

Hindenburg Research, an investment research firm that uses activist short-selling to expose corporate fraud and malfeasance, alleged on Saturday that SEBI chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch and her husband had undisclosed investments in obscure offshore funds in Bermuda and Mauritius, the same entities allegedly used by Vinod Adani -- the elder brother of group chairman Gautam Adani -- to round-trip funds and inflate stock prices.

AICC General Secretary (Organisation) K C Venugopal described the allegations as "very serious" and accused the prime minister of supporting the Adani Group and its chairman Gautam Adani on the matter.

He pointed out that the Supreme Court's verdict in this case was based on SEBI's report, but SEBI chairperson Madhabi and her husband had not disclosed to the apex court their investments in the offshore entities linked to Adani.

He accused the Union government of trying to divert people's attention from the matter by using the Enforcement Directorate against Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi. Meanwhile, BJP rejected the Congress' demand for a JPC probe into Hindenburg's allegation saying it is a sham with an eye on weakening the Indian economy and destroying investment in the country.

BJP leader and former Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad reiterated the party's line that the short-selling firm's charge and the opposition's criticism of the market regulator are part of a wider conspiracy.

Congress wants stock market to crash, he said. *—PTI*

Hindenburg alleged that SEBI Chairperson had investments in offshore funds in Bermuda, Mauritius, entities used by Vinod Adani, brother of Gautam Adani *PHOTO PTI*

HINDENBURG ASKS BUCH TO COME CLEAN

NEW DELHI, 12 AUG

Continuing its broadside against SEBI chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch, US short-seller Hindenburg Research has asked her to come clean on the clients of a consulting firm in which she held stake even while being in office.

Hours after Madhabi and her husband, Dhaval issued a statement calling Hindenburg's latest tirade as an attack on the credibility of SEBI and attempted "character assassination", Hindenburg in a series of posts on X said their response includes several important admissions and raised numerous new critical questions.

"Buch's response now publicly confirms her investment in an obscure Bermuda/Mauritius fund structure, alongside money allegedly siphoned by Vinod Adani. She also confirmed the fund was run by a childhood friend of her husband, who at the time was an Adani director," it said.

Hindenburg had on Saturday alleged that the Buchs opened an account in 2015 with a wealth management firm in Singapore to invest undisclosed sum of money in a Mauritius-registered offshoot of a Bermuda-based fund. The Mauritian fund was run by an Adani director and its ultimate parent was the vehicle used by two Adani associates to round-trip funds and inflate stock prices. *—PTI*

Ex-finmin seeks probe, writes to FM

NEW DELHI, 12 AUG

Former bureaucrat EAS Sarma has written to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman seeking a judicial probe into allegations of a conflict of interest preventing SEBI chairperson from probing charges against Adani group. Hindenburg had on Saturday alleged that SEBI chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch and her husband had undisclosed investments in obscure offshore funds in Bermuda and Mauritius. *—PTI*

This is a gang to defame the country, Rahul (Gandhi) and Jairam Ramesh. Hindenburg defames us. We will not tolerate this insult to the nation. These people are enemies of the country. Now strictest action will be taken against Hindenburg

—Giriraj Singh, Union Minister of Textiles

BANGLADESH CRISIS

Yunus won't allow rift among different communities: Pawar

PUNE, 12 AUG

NCP (SP) Chief Sharad Pawar on Monday said Bangladesh's interim government head Muhammad Yunus is a "secular" leader and he will ensure there is no rift among different communities in the neighbouring country.

Hindus have been facing violence in Bangladesh following the ouster of the Sheikh Hasina-led government.

The neighbouring country has witnessed a spike in crime against Hindus and the destruction of their temples after it was engulfed by civil unrest which started with student protests against the quota system and morphed into a mass uprising against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, leading to her ouster.

Meanwhile, Bahujan Samaj Party president Mayawati urged the central government to take the violence against Hindus and other minorities in Bangladesh seriously. Apparently, referring to Bangladesh situation, Samajwadi Party's Akhilesh Yadav said any country that uses the political situation of another country to serve its own designs weakens itself. He said no community should be a victim of violence in Bangladesh and urged the government to raise the issue at the international level.

In his post on X, Yadav did not specifically name Bangladesh or India but, without elaborating, he mentioned the "failure" of foreign policy. Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan on Monday appealed to the United Nations Human Rights Council to protect minorities in Bangladesh in the wake of widespread anarchy, following the fall of the government there. He called for the protection of Hindus, Christians, Buddhists and the Islamic sect of Ahmadiyas in the neighbouring country. *—PTI*

Sharad Pawar *PHOTO: PTI*

Infiltration bid foiled in Tripura: BSF

AGARTALA, 12 AUG

A "major" infiltration bid by a group of Bangladeshi nationals was thwarted after BSF troops fired one round of non-lethal ammunition in the forward area of Khowai district in Tripura on Monday, a spokesperson said. He said a group of 12-15 Bangladeshi nationals was trying to take advantage of inclement weather and poor visibility in the area during the day and tried to cross over from the area of the district's Paharmura border post. More than 230 people were killed in Bangladesh in incidents of violence. *—PTI*

BJP video: SC extends stay on Kejri defamation case

NEW DELHI, 12 AUG

The Supreme Court on Monday deferred by six weeks hearing on a plea of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal challenging a Delhi High Court order upholding the summons issued to him in a criminal defamation case for retweeting an allegedly defamatory video circulated by YouTuber Dhruv Rathee in 2018.

A bench of justices Sanjiv Khanna, Sanjay Kumar and R Mahadevan posted the matter for hearing after six weeks after senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for Kejriwal, sought some more time to work out a settlement.

"We express regret but some more time may be given (for settlement). Currently, too many things are going on in this man's life," Singhvi submitted.

Earlier, Kejriwal has admitted that he "committed a mistake" by retweeting the alleged defamatory video.

Meanwhile, Kejriwal has moved the Supreme Court against the Delhi High Court order upholding his arrest by the CBI in a corruption case stemming from the alleged excise policy scam.

Arvind Kejriwal *PHOTO PTI*

- The Delhi High Court had on 5 August upheld the arrest of the Chief Minister as legal, and said there was no malice in the acts of the Central Bureau of Investigation

The Delhi High Court had on 5 August upheld the arrest of the Chief Minister as legal, and said there was no malice in the acts of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) which demonstrated how the AAP supremo could influence witnesses who could muster the courage to depose only after his arrest.

The appeal has been filed by the chief minister in the top court, a lawyer associated with the case said on Monday.

The High Court, while upholding his arrest, had asked Kejriwal to move the trial court first for seeking regular bail. *—PTI*

SC seeks responses from CBI, ED on Kavitha's pleas

NEW DELHI, 12 AUG

The Supreme Court on Monday sought responses from the CBI and ED on BRS leader K Kavitha's pleas seeking bail in corruption and money laundering cases linked to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam.

A bench of justices B R Gavai and K V Viswanathan agreed to hear Kavitha's pleas challenging the Delhi High Court's July 1 verdict denying her bail in these cases.

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Kavitha, told the bench that she has been in custody for around five months and the charge sheet and prosecution complaint have been filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) respectively. A prosecution complaint is the ED's equivalent of a charge sheet.

Rohatgi said there were around 500 witnesses in both these cases.

Contending that she was entitled to bail, Rohatgi referred to the apex court's verdict and order passed on the pleas filed by Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Manish Sisodia.

Sisodia was granted bail in both the corruption and money laundering cases linked to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam. *—PTI*

I-DAY SECURITY

A CISF jawan keeps vigil at Taj Mahal ahead of Independence Day, in Agra on Monday. 700 AI-based facial recognition cameras are deployed and snipers, elite SWAT commandos, kite catchers are positioned *PHOTO: PTI*

Dimple Yadav's ex-associate held in attempt to rape case

KANNAUJ, 12 AUG

In a major setback for the Samajwadi Party (SP) its leader Nawab Singh Yadav, a former associate of SP MP Dimple Yadav has been arrested on charges of attempting to rape a 15-year-old minor girl in Kannauj.

The ruling BJP hit out at the SP with the claim that the accused had once been a close affiliate of senior party leader Dimple Yadav when she was the Lok Sabha MP from Kannauj. SP, however, has distanced itself from the row.

Kannauj Superintendent of Police Amit Kumar Anand said, "Around 1.30 am, a call was received at the UP 112 service in which the girl alleged that she was undressed and a rape attempt was made at her."

The girl, along with her aunt, had gone to meet the accused, who had called them on the pretext of securing a job for her, the officer said. The girl said Yadav tried to force himself on her when her aunt had gone to the bathroom. But once she came back and saw Yadav in his inner-wears, they immediately called 112, according to the police.

UP BJP Spokesperson Rakesh Tripathi sought to equate the Kannauj incident with that of a recent Ayodhya rape case involving a minor girl. Tripathi said, "Yadav is not only a small leader of SP, but he has also been (former) MP Yadav's representative." *—PTI*

Forces widen search in J&K to flush out terrorists

SRINAGAR, 12 AUG

The anti-terror operation in the forest area of Anantnag district of Jammu and Kashmir entered the third day on Monday as security forces widened the search area to flush out terrorists, officials said.

Three people, including two soldiers, were killed in the exchange of fire with terrorists on Saturday following which a massive manhunt has been launched in the Ahlan Gagarmandu forest area of Anantnag district to eliminate the ultras.

The operation to hunt down the ultras continued for the third day despite the challenging topography.

The firefight started on Saturday evening during a cordon and search operation that was initiated by the security forces based on intelligence reports indicating the presence of terrorists in the remote Ahlan Gagarmandu forest.

According to officials, a group of terrorists -- believed to be three to four in number -- opened fire at the joint search parties comprising Army personnel, including para commandos, and local police. In the ensuing gun battle, six Army personnel and two civilians were injured, officials said, adding the injured soldiers were promptly taken to a nearby hospital where two succumbed shortly after arrival. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

TO AVOID PANIC

Date must on pics of disaster: Govt to TV channels

NEW DELHI, 12 AUG

The Centre on Monday issued an advisory to private news channels to carry a date and timestamp on visuals of natural disasters and major accidents while reporting on such incidents.

The advisory, issued by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, noted that television channels provide continuous coverage of natural disasters, major accidents over several days but keep showing the footage from the day the incident took place.

The ministry argued that those footages for several days after the accident or disaster does not necessarily reflect the real-time ground situation and leads to "unnecessary confusion and potential panic among viewers".

"Therefore all private satellite TV channels are hereby advised to ensure that visuals of disasters, natural calamity or major accidents should prominently display a 'DATE AND TIME' stamp on the top of the footage," the advisory read.

Meanwhile, the advisory comes in the wake of extensive coverage of the landslides in Wayanad and Himachal Pradesh that claimed several lives recently. The I&B Ministry advisory also "strongly advised" private news channels to ensure adherence to the Programme Code while telecasting such incidents. *—PTI*

A view of the landslide-hit areas as Prime Minister Narendra Modi (not in pic) carries out an aerial survey, in Wayanad district on Saturday *PHOTO: PTI*

Bangladesh students on a mission to stabilise nation

From managing traffic to protecting religious sites, students are doing it all to quell violence

AMINA AFAQ
BENGALURU, 12 AUG

After former prime minister Sheikh Hasina's ouster, a wave of unrest has swept across Bangladesh, leading to sensationalist reports and accusations of violence against Hindu minorities.

Yet, amidst the turmoil, a different narrative is emerging from the ground: one of students protecting minorities.

"The Indian media is portraying that the entire movement was by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Jamaat-e-Islami. It was a students' protest. When the protest over quota started, the students had given Hasina nine agendas but when she refused to listen and gave speeches against them, and the killing of the protesters started, it boiled down to just one—Hasina's resignation," Alisha (name changed, a resident of Bangladesh, said on the condition of anonymity, adding, "It was in these last moments that BNP and Jamaat joined and sought Awami Leagues' downfall." The alleged mass killing of Hindus is also being compared to the genocide in Gaza, with many Right-wingers on social media calling for "#All Eyes On Bangladeshi Hindus". According to reports, at least 232 people have been killed across Bangladesh since 5 August.

'News channels spreading misinformation'

"The Indian channels are playing old videos of Hindus being attacked from previous riots and spreading misinformation," she said.

The source added that misinformation was rampant on social media.

"Indians and Bangladeshis are mocking each other on social media resulting in more hate," Alisha said.

A viral X post falsely claimed that the house of Hindu cricketer Liton Das was set ablaze, a charge that Das himself has refuted.In another post shared by the Right-wing members, it was alleged that a Hindu woman was abused by Hijabi students. However, a fact check revealed that the woman being hit was a Muslim named Afsana Ebad and was assaulted because she was Awami League leader. She claimed that the students were troubled with the media's misinformed coverage adding to their anger over India giving her refugee.

This will likely sour the Indo-Bangla ties in the future, she mused.

A Muslim man offers prayer while standing guard in front of the Dhakeshwari Temple in Bangladesh; Students paint the city walls damaged during the protest **PHOTO: X**

Students' role in stabilising the situation

"After the protest, cities were thrashed. To undo the damage, the students painted the city walls and rehabilitated public spaces," Alisha said.

"Soon after Hasina's ouster, there was widespread robbery and violence. However, students brought everything under control," she said.

The students stood in for traffic police and ensured that people followed the rules, she said. The source claimed that at least 25 students guard each area every night to stop robberies and attacks. "The young generation is trying their best to bring in the change for the betterment of the country and it is like a new Bangladesh," she asserted. Alisha informed that the students' protection was not just limited to the nationals but also the international students, especially Indians.

'Political not communal'

Alisha denied that the attacks on minorities were communal and asserted it was a manifestation of political discontent rather than religious animosity. Local media in Bangladesh reported that since 5 August, several Hindu households across the country were attacked. Reports claimed that the incidents did not stem from communal issues but rather political anger as people attacked only the houses of Awami League leaders who had wronged the citizens.

—Salar News

5 killed as truck hits devotees on way to temple in Assam

KOKRAJHAR, 12 AUG

Five people were killed and three others critically injured when a speeding truck hit devotees and then a car in Assam's Kokrajhar district on Monday morning, police said. The speeding truck hit the devotees near Mahamaya Temple on National Highway 27 in Kachugaon under Gossaigaon police station in which five persons were killed on the spot and one injured. The driver fled with the vehicle from the spot and it collided with a car at Bishmuri, critically injuring two others in the car. The victims are Sukran Roy, 20; Jai Roy, 11; Bappi Ghosh, 21; Basudev Roy, 22; and Naba Ghosh, 26, all residents of Hatigarh Village No 1 under Gossaigaon sub-division. The injured have been admitted to a hospital and their condition was stated to be critical. *—PTI*

6 killed in road accident in Bengal's Bagdogra

SILIGURI, 12 AUG

Six peole were killed and two injured when a speeding vehicle hit them on the Asian Highway 2 at Bagdogra in Darjeeling district of West Bengal on Monday, police said. The condition of one of the two injured in the accident is "critical", a senior police officer said. "All these people were pilgrims who were going to Jangli Baba mandir (Shiv mandir) to perform puja. They were hit by the speeding vehicle coming from the other end," he told PTI. The car, which was going from Ghoshpukur to Sikkim, broke the road divider before crashing into these people, he said, adding that two persons were also injured in the incident. The deceased are Prahlad Roy, a civic volunteer, Gobind Singh, 22; Amlesh Chowdhury, 20; Kanak Burman, 22, Pranab Roy, 28, and Padakant Roy, they said.*—PTI*

JNU teachers begin hunger strike over delayed promotions

NEW DELHI, 12 AUG

Members of the Jawaharlal Nehru University Teachers' Association began a 24-hour hunger strike on campus on Monday to protest against alleged delays in promotions. There was no immediate response from Jawaharlal Nehru University Vice-Chancellor Santishree D Pandit on the hunger strike and the allegation. More than a dozen professors from various departments associated with the Jawaharlal Nehru University Teachers' Association (JNUTA) joined the sit-in at the School of Languages lawn. Posters bearing slogans such as "Promoting the Truth about Promotion", "Promotions are Hard Earned", and "Waiting for Promotions" were put up at the protest site. The protesters alleged promotions under the University Grants Commission's Career Advancement Scheme (CAS) had been selectively provided and delayed in many cases since 2016.*—PTI*

NO RELIEF

More rains lead to closure of 338 roads in Himachal

An area in Tamil Nadu's Krishnagiri waterlogged after heavy rainfall on Monday **PHOTO: X**

SHIMLA, 12 AUG

Landslides and flash floods triggered by heavy rain since Sunday led to the closure of 338 roads, including four national highways in Himachal Pradesh, officials said.

Several areas in Una are waterlogged, they said on Monday.

Rescue operations to locate about 30 people who went missing after the 31 July flash floods in Kullu, Mandi and Shimla districts are being conducted but there has been no major success. So far, 28 bodies have been recovered, the officials said.

More than 100 people have been killed in rain-related incidents and the state suffered losses of about Rs 842 crore between 27 June and 9 August, they said.

The State Emergency Operation Centre said of the 338 roads closed, 104 were in Shimla, 71 in Mandi, 58 in Sirmaur, 55 in Chamba, 26 in Kullu, seven each in Solan and Lahaul & Spiti, five in Kinnaur, four in Kangra and one in Bilaspur district.

It added that 488 power and 116 water supply schemes were also disrupted on Monday.

Flash floods and landslides have been reported in Chamba, Mandi, Kinnaur, Shimla, Sirmaur and Solan districts, the officials said.

—PTI

Special drive held to retrieve docus in Wayanad

WAYANAD, 12 AUG

A special camp to retrieve official documents of the landslide survivors who lost everything, was launched on Monday in the disaster-hit regions of Wayanad, where a search mission to locate missing people continued.

The camps are being held in select schools in Meppadi here as part of the certificate/document retrieval campaign jointly carried out by the Local Self Government department, district administration and the state IT Mission.

Meanwhile, a 190-member team comprising NDRF, police, fire force, Civil Defence Force, Forest Department and rescue volunteers resumed the search operation at five zones of the disaster-struck area this morning. *—PTI*

Rain hits normal life in Rajasthan districts

Jaipur, 12 Aug

Continuous rain has affected life in many districts of Rajasthan, including the capital Jaipur. In the last 24 hours, a record 118 mm rainfall has been recorded in Jaipur and the spell is still continuing. A holiday has been declared in schools in many districts, including Bharatpur, Karauli, Dausa and Sawai Madhopur. It has been raining intermittently in the state capital since Sunday afternoon. *—PTI*

West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee meets the parents of a postgraduate trainee doctor who was raped and killed in Kolkata, at Panihati in North 24 Parganas, on Monday; Doctors protest against the rape of the Kolkata trainee doctor in New Delhi, Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

Doctors' protest on, Didi vows CBI probe by Sunday

KOLKATA, 12 AUG

Amid public outrage and ongoing strike by junior doctors at RG Kar Hospital demanding a magisterial inquiry into a woman physician's alleged rape and murder, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee pledged to transfer the case to CBI if police fail to solve it by Sunday.

Supporting the cease work, junior doctors, interns, and postgraduate trainees at other state-run medical establishments across the state vowed to continue their agitation, now in its fourth day, until the culprits are brought to justice.

A two-member team of the National Commission for Women (NCW) this afternoon arrived in Kolkata and is scheduled to meet city police commissioner Vineet Goyal and the family members of the victim.

The body of the woman post-graduate trainee, who was allegedly raped and murdered inside a seminar hall of the hospital, was found on Friday morning. A civic volunteer was arrested on Saturday in connection with the case and was sent to 14-day police custody.

At least three Public Interest Litigations (PILs) were also filed before the Calcutta High Court, demanding that the investigation be transferred to the CBI.

A division bench, presided over by Chief Justice TS Sivagnanam, will hear these PILs on Tuesday.

Visiting the residence of the deceased doctor, the chief minister vowed to seek the death penalty for those responsible and stated her determination to see that justice is served.

Banerjee said the family members of the deceased doctor suspect that an insider was involved.

Facing backlash for the perceived failure to ensure the safety of the hospital's staff, the principal of RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, Sandip Ghosh, resigned from his post and government service on Monday.

The protesting doctors have also called for the post-mortem report of the victim and the CCTV footage near the seminar hall to be made public.

While senior doctors have been called back from leave to handle the influx of patients, the situation remains tense, with outpatient departments struggling to cope.

Support for the striking doctors has poured in from across the country.

The Federation of Resident Doctors' Association of India (FORDA) has endorsed the strike and called for a nationwide halt to elective services.

—PTI

SC JUNKS PLEA AGAINST CANCELLATION OF UGC-NET EXAM

NEW DELHI, 12 AUG

Supreme Court on Monday refused to entertain a fresh plea filed by some examinees challenging the government's decision to cancel the UGC-NET examination following alleged question paper leak, saying that entertaining it at this stage will create "chaos".

A bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said the government is conducting the exam afresh on 21 August and the students, who are around nine lakh, must have some kind of "certainty now".

"The Supreme Court stepping now will have a serious effect and there will be chaos all over," the CJI said while declining to entertain the plea filed by Praveen Dabas and others.

The bench said the exam was held on 18 June and was cancelled a day after that. *—PTI*

FARMERS PROTEST: SC DIRECTS REOPENING OF SHAMBHU BORDER

NEW DELHI, 12 AUG

The Supreme Court on Monday directed the police chiefs of both Punjab and Haryana to hold a meeting along with the SPs of adjoining Patiala and Ambala districts within one week for partial reopening of the highway at the Shambhu border, where protesting farmers have been camping since 13 February. The court asked Punjab to persuade protesting farmers at the Shambhu border to remove tractors from the road, saying highways are not parking space. A bench of justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan also appreciated the Punjab and Haryana government for suggesting apolitical names for constituting a committee, which will hold meetings with the protesting farmers.

The bench said opening of the road at Shambhu order is needed to facilitate movement of ambulances, essential services, senior citizens, women,and girl students. *—PTI*

HC GRANTS PROTECTION FROM ARREST TO KHEDKAR TILL 21 AUGUST

NEW DELHI, 12 AUG

Delhi High Court on Monday granted interim protection from arrest till 21 August to former IAS probationer Puja Khedkar, who has been accused of cheating and wrongly availing OBC and disability quota benefits.

Justice Subramonium Prasad issued notice to the Delhi Police as well as the UPSC on the anticipatory bail plea by Khedkar, and asked them to file their responses.

The court listed the case for further hearing on 21 August.

Khedkar allegedly misrepresented information in her application for the UPSC Civil Services Examination, 2022 to get reservation benefits. On 31 July, the UPSC cancelled Khedkar's candidature and debarred her from future exams. On 1 August, a sessions court here had denied anticipatory bail to her and said there are serious allegations against her, which "require a thorough investigation". *—PTI*

A LEGACY ENDS

Kochi's last Jewish woman dies at 89

Queenie Hallegua **PHOTO: SOCIAL MEDIA**

KOCHI, 12 AUG

The last woman from the Jewish community in Kochi has died due to age-related ailments at her residence in Mattancherry near here.

Queenie Hallegua, 89, died on Sunday and her funeral was held at the Jewish cemetery here following the rituals of the community, family sources said.

She is survived by son and daughter, both of whom are settled in the US.

Her nephew, Keith Hallegua, 65, is the lone Jewish community member in Kochi now, M C Praveen, the trustee of the Paradesi Synagogue here, said.

"She had been unwell for some time. Her children came down to be with her as her health deteriorated. Now there will be a seven-day mourning. After that, in 11 months, they will build a tomb in memory of her," he said.

- According to Jewish culture, there is a requirement of ten male members for such ceremonies, and the funeral was held following the tradition.

According to Jewish culture, there is a requirement of ten male members for such ceremonies, and the funeral was held following the tradition.

Two Jews, who were in Fort Kochi as tourists, also took part in the funeral, he said.

Queenie is the daughter of S Koder, who introduced electricity distribution in Kochi city. He was also the first to introduce the boat service in Kochi and is also credited with setting up the first department store in Kerala.

The Paradesi Synagogue, located in Mattancherry Jew Town near here, is a historic site that attracts tourists.

It was built in 1568 AD by Samuel Castiel, David Belila, and Joseph Levi for the flourishing Paradesi Jewish community in Cochin.

It is the oldest active synagogue in the Commonwealth of Nations. *—PTI*

SC junks ED plea against NDTV over FEMA norms

NEW DELHI, 12 AUG

Supreme Court on Monday dismissed a plea by the ED challenging a Bombay High Court order, which directed RBI to consider the compounding applications filed by NDTV in a case of alleged FEMA violation.

A bench of Justice Abhay S Oka and Justice Augustine George Masih said no case for interference was made out.

High Court, in its 2018 order, set aside objections raised to the compounding proceedings by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), which had earlier flagged the alleged Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) violations and issued showcause notices to NDTV.

In November 2015, the ED issued showcause notices to the news organisation for allegedly flouting foreign exchange regulations while availing of overseas and foreign direct investment facilities to the tune of more than Rs 2,000 crore.

- In March 2016, NDTV filed an application with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for compounding of the contraventions alleged in the showcause notices.

In March 2016, NDTV filed an application with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for compounding of the contraventions alleged in the showcause notices. *—PTI*

PRESIDENTIAL TALKS

Indonesian President Joko Widodo talks with Indonesian Defence Minister and president-elect Prabowo Subianto, and Indonesian Vice President Ma'ruf Amin in the new capital city Nusantara, Indonesian Presidential Palace on Monday
PHOTO: PTI

WORLD ELEPHANT DAY

Kerala's villages battle fear of jumbo attacks

As per current estimates, Kerala has an elephant population of approximately 2,000 to 2,500 ***PHOTO: PTI***

Amidst the heartbreaking and disturbing stories of the Wayanad landslide tragedy, an incident in which a herd of jumbos came to the rescue of a woman and her family touched the hearts of animal lovers recently.

Sujatha and her family reportedly encountered a wild tusker and two female elephants when they climbed a hilltop to rescue themselves from the gushing flood waters and huge boulders. The animals are said to have come very close to the family but stood beside them silently after the frightened woman requested the animals in tears not to harm them anymore, as they just survived a deadly landslide and were waiting to be rescued.

Sujatha later told the media that tears had rolled down the tusker's eyes, giving the impression that it had understood their plight. But it was in the same Wayanad that a hapless man was mercilessly trampled to death by a wild elephant in the courtyard of a house months ago.

As World Elephant Day is observed on Monday with various programmes and festivities across the country, the hamlets in the mountains of Kerala remain under constant fear of wild elephants straying into human habitats.

In recent months, nail-biting incidents of human encounters with wild tuskers, the resulting casualties and the widespread destruction of agricultural crops have been reported not only in the forest-fringe hamlets of Wayanad but also in the hill station Munnar in Idukki district and in the remote villages of Palakkad district of the state.

According to the Forest Department's figures, as many as 17 people have lost their lives in elephant attacks in Kerala during 2023-2024. Early this year, Ajeesh, a 42-year-old man, was trampled to death by a radio-collared elephant in the Mananthavady area of Wayanad.

In CCTV visuals that surfaced later, a huge jumbo, named Belur Magna by forest officials, destroyed a compound wall to chase the hapless man and finally trampled him to death in the courtyard of a house.

Despite an extensive search to capture the rogue elephant, the animal continued to remain elusive, forcing the authorities to cancel the mission later. The frequent straying of Arikomban, a rice-loving elephant that used to attack shops in the tourist hill station of Munnar, also triggered a huge debate in the state in recent times.

The translocation of the jumbo -- first to the Periyar Tiger Reserve and then to Kalakkad-Mundanthurai Reserve -- invited protests from elephant lovers. Another wild elephant, PT 7 (Palakkad 7), which used to wreak havoc in a few villages in Palakkad district, also gave tough times to the local people and forest officials.

The rogue elephant, which was renamed Dhoni later, was tranquilised and captured with the aid of kumkis (trained captive elephants) by forest personnel in an hours-long mission. Several people, including a news channel cameraman, have lost their lives in the elephant attacks in the state in recent times.

AV Mukesh, 34, working with Mathrubhumi News, was seriously injured in an elephant attack when he and a reporter were capturing visuals of the movement of a stray elephant herd in Malampuzha in Palakkad district last May.

Leading wildlife expert Dr P S Easa said that encounters between humans and elephants have been reported in the forest-fringe areas of the state since the 1800s. But there seems to be an escalation in recent times.

Many factors, including developmental activities within sanctuaries and national parks or even outside them, are contributing to human-wildlife conflict, he said. There can't be a 'no-conflict' situation; only tough action by authorities would reduce the number of such encounters, he explained.

Taking the example of increased incidents of wild elephants straying into human habitats in Chinnakkanal in Idukki, he said if the issue is to be resolved, the connectivity of the Munnar-Chinnakkanal traditional elephant path should be re-established.

"Elephants are trapped there with no chance of movement to a larger area. That is the main issue there," he explained. If such reasons are considered and specific solutions are implemented, it may not be palatable to everyone, the expert pointed out.

The Kerala government had told the state assembly that there has been an increase in the wild animal population in the mountain ranges of the state, and it is one of the reasons for the human-animal conflict in those places.

The government said that it has adopted various measures to prevent human-animal conflict in the areas of the state adjacent to forests, especially in Wayanad district, which has seen an increase in instances of wild animals entering inhabited areas. As the state grapples with these tragic events, the issue of human-wildlife conflict had also become a major talking point in the recent Lok Sabha elections. *—PTI*

LETTERS Write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR ساڈہ

Geneva Conventions at 75: Do war laws still hold?

The fourth convention seeks to protect civilians living under the power of an adversary, such as in occupied territory ***PHOTO: PTI***

Today marks 75 years since the adoption of the Geneva Conventions on 12 August 1949. In theory, these rules of war are universally agreed by every nation. In practice, they are routinely violated everywhere.

With an estimated 120 armed conflicts worldwide, more than 450 armed groups and 195 million people living in areas under their control, the protection of the vulnerable is as vitally important as ever.

As the news headlines remind us daily, however, international humanitarian law can seem like too little, too late when faced with military might and political indifference.

This year also marks other, less hopeful, anniversaries: 10 years since the genocide against the Yazidi by ISIS in Syria, and ten years of war in Ukraine. Geopolitical tensions are escalating in the Middle East and the South China Sea.

Given the modern technologies used on today's battlefields (and in cyberspace), and the violation of even basic humanitarian protections, is there much to celebrate in 2024? Are the Geneva Conventions still fit for purpose for today's wars – and tomorrow's?

Humanitarian values

All societies have cultural, religious or legal rules of some kind around war. But in the aftermath of World War II's extreme horrors, the world agreed to a detailed set of codified rules governing armed conflict.

Despite differing political views and experiences of war, countries agreed to the Geneva Convention rules by striking a balance between military need and humanitarian ideals for the treatment of civilians, captured enemy soldiers and the dead.

The 1949 Conventions remain the core of international humanitarian law, or the laws of armed conflict. This body of law has been expanded over the years by other treaties and protocols dealing with civil war, chemical weapons, antipersonnel landmines, torture and enforced disappearances.

Designed to help prevent a spiral of tit-for-tat atrocities, many of the rules work due to reciprocal respect between combatants: treat our soldiers well when captured and we will do likewise.

But they also demand the humane treatment of people caught up in war, even if one warring party has breached those rules or started the war in violation of the United Nations Charter that prohibits aggression.

Four conventions, 400 articles

The Geneva Conventions include more than 400 articles, setting out detailed rules for the treatment of prisoners, protecting hospitals and medical staff, allowing humanitarian aid, and prohibiting torture, rape and sexual violence.

In fact, four conventions were adopted in 1949. The first three's provisions built on existing laws protecting wounded soldiers on the battlefield, at sea and when captured as prisoners.

The key fourth convention sought to protect civilians living under the power of an adversary, such as in occupied territory.

A single article provided fundamental rules about the humane treatment of people during a civil war – the first time international law had dared to regulate violence occurring within a country rather than between two or more.

War and peace

Some say international humanitarian law took the wrong approach back in the 1860s when the very first Geneva Convention was adopted, because it accepted war and gave up on insisting on peace.

As the scholar Samuel Moyn has argued, this has forced us to choose between the ideal of opposing war in the first place and opposing the crimes that take place within it.

Humanitarian law also accepts a minimum level of harm to civilians as "collateral damage" during an attack on a military target. In other words, not all civilian deaths are war crimes.

And some articles in the conventions seem old-fashioned today – tobacco is mentioned together with food and water for prisoners of war, for example.

But in my own experience working with the International Committee of the Red Cross, I have seen international humanitarian law in action. When respected, it can save and improve lives.

Eternal vigilance

Warring parties everywhere still allow the Red Cross to visit thousands of detained people, and to negotiate about improving their treatment.

Combatants make agreements for prisoner swaps, hostage release, return of the dead, and the provision of medical care to wounded enemy soldiers.

Sometimes, countries investigate war crimes allegations. And the conventions make it possible for warring parties to make other agreements for even greater protections.

And while the Geneva Conventions, and international humanitarian law more generally, are far from perfect, the rules seek a basic limit on the worst humanity has to offer, insisting on some fundamental human dignity.

To ensure they are at least not actively breached, and ideally their protections extended, countries must do three key things:

- Focus on collective responsibility, comply with the law themselves, and ensure respect by others
- Stop using technical legal arguments to legitimise large-scale devastation in ways that ignore the fundamental humanitarian purpose of the rules
- Resist any claim by a nation state that exceptional national security threats (including terrorism, insurgency or new technologies) justify the rules being abandoned.

It is precisely in the gravest situations, when politics and other laws have failed to prevent war, that these rules are most needed. Greater respect for them would go a long way to saving lives and preventing the horrors we see in today's conflicts.

—The Conversation

From Paris to Los Angeles: How LA is preparing for 2028 Olympics

It's Los Angeles' (LA) turn for the torch. Mayor Karen Bass accepted the Olympic flag at the Paris closing ceremony Sunday, before handing it off to a key representative of LA's local business — Tom Cruise — who in a pre-recorded trek via motorcycle, plane and parachute kicked off the countdown to 2028.

The city will become the third in the world to host the games three times as it adds to the storied years of 1932 and 1984. Here's a look forward and back in time at the Olympics in LA.

LA's Olympic trilogy

Los Angeles got the 2028 games as a consolation prize when Paris was picked for 2024.

Back in 1932, LA hosted its first Olympics. The city was the only bidder for the games at a time marred by the Great Depression and the absence of several nations. Yet memorable sport moments came from athletes including American athlete Babe Didrikson Zaharias, who won golds in the new women's events of javelin and hurdles.

Financial and cultural success gave 1984 a reputation as the "good" Olympics" which made seemingly every major world city want their own.

Emphasising both the modern and the classical with a hand from Hollywood, the games opened with decathlon champion Rafer Johnson lighting the torch, a guy in a jetpack descending into the Memorial Coliseum and theme music by "Star Wars" maestro John Williams.

With Eastern Bloc countries boycotting, the US dominated. Carl Lewis and Mary Lou Retton are among the athletes who became household names. A young Michael Jordan led the men's basketball team to gold.

The games renewed, for a while, the global reputation of a city that had been perceived to be in decline.

"We want our games to be a modern games, youthful, full of the optimism that Southern California brings to the world and the globe," Janet Evans, four-time Olympic gold medalist in swimming and chief athlete officer for the LA 2028 organizing committee, told The Associated Press in Paris.

Passing the torch

Bass, who arrives back in LA Monday, spent these games in Paris along with organizers and city officials, learning what it takes to host the world's largest sporting event.

Joining her were LA28 Chairperson Casey Wasserman, an entertainment executive, and LA councilmember Traci Park, chair of the city Olympic committee.

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass announced that the city had secured nearly $80 million in federal funds to go toward zero-emission buses and charging infrastructure ***PHOTO: THE NYT***

"As we've seen here in Paris, the Olympics are an opportunity to make transformative change," Bass said at a press conference ahead of the closing ceremony.

Venues old and new, plus a swimming stadium

Amid a stadium-and-arena boom, LA will polish existing structures rather than erect new ones.

"It's a no-build games," Evans said.

After Paris' innovative opening ceremony on the Seine River, LA plans to open with a traditional, stadium-based approach at SoFi Stadium in neighboring Inglewood that also incorporates the century-old Memorial Coliseum in Los Angeles itself.

Home to two NFL teams, SoFi has hosted a Super Bowl and several Taylor Swift concerts since opening in 2020. It will become what organizers say is the largest Olympic swimming venue ever. Its opening ceremony role means swimming will come after track and field for the first time since 1972.

Intuit Dome, the soon-to-open Inglewood home of the NBA's Clippers, would be the games' newest major venue and is the planned home for Olympic basketball. The Lakers' downtown Crypto.com Arena will host gymnastics.

The toxicity of swimming in the Seine became a serious issue in Paris. That could put renewed focus on the Long Beach area waterfront when it hosts marathon swimming and triathlon races. Its cleanliness history is mixed but its ocean waters got consistently high marks in a 2023 analysis by nonprofit Heal the Bay.

The Long Beach shore was home to the pre-recorded performances during Sunday's ceremony of the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Billie Eilish, Snoop Dogg and Dr. Dre, though it was easy to mistake for LA's Venice Beach, where the journey of the flag begun by Cruise was shown ending moments earlier.

Trains, buses and traffic

A city that's notoriously hard to traverse may seem like an odd fit for the Olympics, but it can work.

Bass said she plans to emulate the tactics of Tom Bradley, the mayor in 1984, whose traffic mitigations had some saying it was better than at non-Olympic times. They include asking local businesses to stagger workforce hours to reduce the number of cars on the road and allow work from home during the 17-day games.

Landing the Olympics under then-Mayor Eric Garcetti in 2017 gave the city an unusually long lead time for planning.

While it's no Paris Metro, LA has built a subway since its last Olympics, with lines running past major venues.

Another high-profile project is the Inglewood People Mover, an automated, three-stop rail line past major Olympic venues. It initially received a commitment of $1 billion in federal funding, but opposition from Democratic Rep. Maxine Waters led to a $200 million reduction, the Los Angeles Times reported. It's unclear whether the line will be completed by 2028.

Metro recently received $900 million in funding through an infrastructure spending package and grants from the Biden administration, of which $139 million will go directly toward improving transportation by 2028 and the goal of a "car-free" Olympics.

"The biggest challenge is not waiting to 2028, but really taking the opportunity between now and 2028 to help Angelenos and visitors alike reimagine the transportation network as something that will be their first choice," Metro CEO Stephanie Wiggins said. *—AP*

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

Wildfire rages in Athens, goes out of control

ATHENS, 12 AUG

P Hundreds of firefighters backed by more than two dozen water-dropping planes were battling a major forest fire raging out of control Monday on the northern fringes of the Greek capital. A children's hospital and a military hospital were being evacuated early Monday morning, the fire department said, while evacuation orders were issued for more than a dozen areas, including Marathon and several Athens suburbs. Authorities in nearby suburbs were opening at least one sports hall and providing rooms in hotels for evacuees. Two firefighters were slightly injured, while several civilians were treated in hospitals for smoke inhalation. *—AP*

IS claims responsibility for explosion in Kabul

ISLAMABAD, 12 AUG

The Islamic State group claimed responsibility on Monday for a minivan explosion in the Afghan capital that killed at least one person. The militant group said in a statement that it had detonated an explosive device on Sunday targeting carrying members of the Shiite minority community, killing and wounding about 13 people. Police spokesman Khalid Zadran confirmed Monday that a bomb had exploded in western part of Kabul city, killing one civilian and wounding eleven. The Dashti Barchi area of Kabul has been repeatedly targeted by the Islamic State group's affiliate in Afghanistan. The group has carried out major assaults on schools, hospitals and mosques. It has also attacked other Shiite areas across the country. *—PTI*

Police tortures scribe for reporting alleged corruption

ISLAMABAD, 12 AUG

A journalist was tortured by the Pakistan local police after exposing alleged corruption by the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), ARY News reported. Khursheed Rajput, a journalist from Tando Adam, with a friend, was presented in court by the police, who requested a remand. However, the civil magistrate rejected the plea and ordered that the journalist be sent to jail instead. The police charged Rajput with robbery and possession of illegal weapons, however, the journalist said that these were false and fabricated charges. Rajput also revealed that the SHO of Tando Adam recorded his indecent videos while he was being tortured. *—ANI*

B'desh's Yunus acquitted in graft case

The interim head had been in a protracted row with the Hasina govt due to obscure reasons

People stage protest in Houston against anti-Hindu violence in Bangladesh *PHOTO: X/ @VIVEK2223*

DHAKA, 12 AUG

Bangladesh's interim leader, Muhammad Yunus was acquitted in a graft case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission over the misappropriation of funds from the Grameen Telecom Workers and Employees Welfare Fund, on Sunday three days after he took oath as the head of Bangladesh's interim government, according to a media report.

Judge Md Rabiul Alam of the Special Judge's Court-4 of Dhaka gave the order after accepting the graft agency's application, seeking to withdraw the case under the Code of Criminal Procedure, an official of the anti-graft agency was quoted as saying by The Daily Star newspaper.

On 7 August, the Labour Appellate Tribunal acquitted the Nobel laureate and three top officials of Grameen Telecom - Ashraful Hassan, M Shahjahan and Nurjahan Begum - in a labour law violation case in which they were sentenced to six months' imprisonment and fined Tk 30,000 each in January.

Yunus had been in a protracted row with the Sheikh Hasina government due to obscure reasons while authorities initiated a series of investigations against him after she came to power in 2008. A top adviser of Bangladesh's interim government said that Hasina's stay in India will not hurt bilateral relations and Dhaka will always try to maintain good relations with New Delhi. *—PTI*

The recent resignation statement attributed to my mother published in a newspaper is completely false and fabricated. I have just confirmed with her that she did not make any statement either before or since leaving Dhaka
-Sajeed Wazeb , Ex-Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina's son

Surrender all illegal firearms: Interim govt

Bangladesh interim government's Home Affairs Adviser Brigadier General (retd) M Sakhawat Hussain on Monday asked protesters to surrender by 19 August all illegal and unauthorised firearms, including the rifles looted from law enforcers during the recent violence, according to a media report.
Hussain said that if those arms were not returned to nearby police stations, then the authorities would undertake a search and if anyone is found in possession of unauthorised weapons, charges would be lodged against them, The Daily Star newspaper reported. *—PTI*

Police call off strike in B'desh; get back to work

DHAKA, 12 AUG

Protesting police officers in Bangladesh have agreed to call off their strike after the interim government assured them to meet most of their demands, according to media reports on Monday.

The Bangladesh Police Subordinate Employees Association (BPSEA) declared the strike on 6 August, following clashes across the country between police and students during the widespread protests against Sheikh Hasina's government over a controversial quota system in jobs.

The representatives of the strikes made the announcement of the strike's withdrawal after a meeting with the interim Home Affairs Adviser Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhawat Hussain on Sunday, the Dhaka Tribune newspaper reported.

They said the police had been assured that most of the demands on their 11-point list would be met.

Based on the meeting, it was decided that the protesting non-cadre police personnel will return to work from Monday, the bdnews24.com news portal reported.

"After the meeting with the home affairs advisor, we received assurances, and we will wear our uniforms and rejoin work from Monday," the report quoted Sgt Asaduzzaman Jewel, a member of an investigation committee formed by the Inspector-general of police, as saying.

Interim Home Affairs Adviser Sakhawat said those who ordered excessive force were at the political level, and no wrongdoers would be spared. He added that an investigation would be conducted. *—PTI*

Businesses in Bangladesh hit by cash supply drought: Report

Businesses in Bangladesh are facing a liquidity crunch as the central bank has capped the withdrawal of cash from banks at Rs 1.42 lakh approximately lakh amidst uncertainty in the country following the fall of the Sheikh Hasin-led government, a media report said on Monday. The central bank decided this due to security concerns as police are yet to return to work fully, following the clashes between police and students during the widespread protests against Hasina's Awami League-led government over a controversial quota system in jobs. Interim Finance and Planning Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed on Sunday also said that the limit on cash withdrawals was required given the current situation. *—AP*

BANGLADESH SEES AN INFLUX OF ROHINGYAS

BANGKOK, 12 AUG

More Rohingya are arriving in Bangladesh from Myanmar with war-related injuries amid escalating conflict between the military and the Arakan Army (AA) in western Rakhine State, according to international medical group Doctors without Borders, known by its French initials MSF.

MSF said its teams in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, treated 39 people for conflict-related injuries including mortar shell injuries and gunshot wounds in the four days leading up to August 7. More than 40 percent of the injured were women and children, it added in a statement.

"Considering the rise in the number of wounded Rohingya patients crossing from Myanmar in recent days, and the nature of the injuries our teams are treating, we are becoming increasingly concerned about the impact of the conflict on Rohingya people," said Orla Murphy, MSF's country representative in Bangladesh. "It is clear that safe space for civilians in Myanmar is shrinking more each day, with people caught up in the ongoing fighting and forced to make perilous journeys to Bangladesh to seek safety."

In 2017, at least 750,000 Rohingya fled into Bangladesh after the Myanmar military launched a brutal crackdown that is now being investigated as a genocide. Many of the thousands who remain continue to live in camps where their movements are restricted. *—Courtesy, Al-Jazeera*

More than 76,000 people have fled the border area in Kursk *PHOTO: PTI*

Russia evacuates Belgorod dist amid Ukraine threat

MOSCOW/ KYIV 12 AUG

Russia has begun evacuations in the Belgorod region as it eyes rising military activity across the border in Ukraine.

The governor of Belgorod announced on Monday that he had ordered civilians in one district of the region to head for safety. Russian forces are battling an Ukrainian offensive in the neighbouring Kursk region.

"The enemy is active on the border of the Krasnoyaruzhsky district", Vyacheslav Gladkov warned on the Telegram messaging platform on Monday.

More than 76,000 people have fled the border area in Kursk.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's deputy energy minister, later identified as Oleksandr Kheil, was arrested on corruption charges, the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) reported on Monday.

Ukrainska Pravda confirmed that he was the individual in question. Kheil allegedly demanded bribes from representatives of a state-owned coal company to facilitate the transfer of mining equipment from near the frontline hotspot of Pokrovsk in Donetsk Oblast, where fighting is currently ongoing, and then transport it to the Lviv-Volyn region in western Ukraine. Kheil allegedly involved three other accomplices in his corruption scheme. *—Courtesty, Al Jazeera/ Kyiv Independent*

ANOTHER WAR?

Iranian attack expected: Israel

According to reports, Israel is preparing for a broader Iranian attack, potentially more extensive than the drone assault in April *PHOTO: PTI*

JERUSALEM, 12 AUG

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu instructed on Monday his government ministers to refrain from making public statements related to security issues.

This move comes amid growing expectations in Israel of potential retaliatory attacks from Iran and the Lebanese group Hezbollah in response to the assassinations of senior figures. According to the Israeli Broadcasting Authority, KAN, Netanyahu "warned his ministers against discussing security matters in the coming days, emphasizing the "critical nature" of the situation. The broadcaster said that Israel is preparing for a broader Iranian attack, potentially more extensive than the drone assault in April, which saw Israel targeted by dozens of missiles and drones.

"New assessments within Israel suggest that Iran remains determined to launch this attack despite recent indications that it might have backed down due to political pressures," KAN added.

—Courtesy, Anadolu Ajansı

New submarines for Middle East

WASHINGTON DC, 12 AUG

US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin has ordered a guided missile submarine to the Middle East and is telling the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier strike group to sail more quickly to the area, the Defense Department said Sunday.

Austin issued the order after speaking with Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, who told him Iran's military preparations suggest Iran is getting ready for a large-scale attack on Israel, Axios reporter Barak Ravid said on X, citing a source with knowledge of the call.

The moves come as the US and other allies push for Israel and Hamas to achieve a cease-fire agreement that could help calm soaring tensions in the region following the assassination of Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran and a senior Hezbollah commander in Beirut.

While the USS Georgia, a nuclear-powered submarine, was already in the Mediterranean Sea in July, according to a US military post on social media, it was a rare move to publicly announce the deployment of a submarine.

"Secretary Austin reiterated the United States' commitment to take every possible step to defend Israel and noted the strengthening of US military force posture and capabilities throughout the Middle East in light of escalating regional tensions," Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder, Pentagon press secretary, said in a statement.

—Courtesy, Al- Jazeera

- The moves come as the US and other allies push for Israel and Hamas to achieve a cease-fire agreement that could help calm soaring tensions in the region following the assassination of Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran

At least 28 killed, 46 injured in Sudan clashes

KHARTOUM, 12 AUG

At least 28 civilians were killed and 46 others injured in an attack by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on El Fasher, the capital city of North Darfur State in western Sudan, on Saturday, Al-Hafiz Bakheet, the state's acting governor, said on Sunday.

"The RSF militia resorted to new massacres after the systematic shelling of markets and civilian facilities, and storming homes of citizens and liquidating them," he said. According to the governor, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the joint force of the armed movements in the Darfur region had managed to repulse the RSF attack and inflicted heavy losses on them. "El Fasher will remain resilient and steadfast and soon will be free of any rebels," the governor said.

Sudan has been witnessing a conflict between the SAF and the RSF since 15 April, 2023, resulting in the loss of at least 16,650 lives. 10.7 million people are now internally displaced in Sudan. *—Courtesy, Xinhua*

10.7 million are now internally displaced in Sudan *PHOTO: ANADOLU AJANSI*

VANDALISED!

The statue at the 1971 Shaheed Memorial Complex in Bangladesh has been vandalised. The statue commemorated the moment Pakistan surrendered in 1971, ending Bangladesh Liberation War *PHOTO: X/@SHASHITHAROOR*

COURT MARTIAL INITIATIED

Pak's ex-ISI chief Faiz Hameed arrested by military

ISLAMABAD, 12 AUG

In an unprecedented move, the Pakistan Army on Monday announced that it has arrested former ISI chief Lt Gen (retd.) Faiz Hameed and initiated court martial proceedings against him in connection with a housing scheme scandal.

"Complying with the orders of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, a detailed court of inquiry was undertaken by Pakistan Army, to ascertain correctness of complaints in Top City Case made against Lt Gen Faiz Hameed (Retd)," the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) - the media wing of the army- said in a statement.

"Consequently, appropriate disciplinary action has been initiated against Lt Gen Faiz Hameed (Retd.), under provisions of the Pakistan Army Act," it said.

Former ISI chief Lt Gen Faiz Hameed was considered extremely powerful when he headed the spy agency from 2019 to 2021. *PHOTO: X/@ATMAJA*

"In addition, multiple instances of violation of the Pakistan Army Act post-retirement have also been established. The process of Field General Court Martial has been initiated and Lt Gen Faiz Hameed (Retd) has been taken into military custody," it added.

Lt Gen (retd.) Hameed was considered extremely powerful when he headed the spy agency from 2019 to 2021. He was appointed to the coveted post when then ISI chief and current Army chief Lt Gen Asim Munir was prematurely removed from the post. It was reported then that then prime minister Imran Khan was not happy with Munir. *—AP*

PHOTO: SALAR

Rupee falls 2 paise to close at 83.97 against US Dollar

MUMBAI, 12 AUG

The rupee consolidated in a narrow range and settled for the day lower by 2 paise at 83.97 (provisional) against the American currency on Monday, as market participants remained on the sidelines ahead of the release of key domestic macroeconomic data. Forex traders said the Indian rupee declined on a positive tone in the US dollar and a surge in crude oil prices. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.95 and touched an intraday low of 83.98 and finally settled at 83.97 (provisional) against the American currency, lower by 2 paise from its previous close. The local unit had slumped 37 paise to settle at an all-time low of 84.09 against the US dollar on 5 August. On Friday, the rupee settled for the day higher by 2 paise at 83.95 against US dollar. *—PTI*

Gold rises Rs 200, silver rallies Rs 1,000 per kg

NEW DELHI, 12 AUG

Gold prices rose by Rs 200 to Rs 72,350 per 10 grams while silver prices rallied by Rs 1,000 per kg in the local market here on Monday amid firm global trends. In the previous session, the yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed lower at Rs 72,150 per 10 grams on Saturday, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Silver prices jumped by Rs 1,000 to Rs 83,500 per kg from Rs 82,500 per kg in the previous close. Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also climbed by Rs 200 to Rs 72,000 per 10 grams. In the previous trade, it had ended at Rs 71,800 per 10 grams. Traders attributed the rise in gold prices to increased demand from local jewellers and a strong trend in the overseas markets. *—PTI*

SWREL gets ₹550 cr solar plant order in Rajasthan

NEW DELHI, 12 AUG

Sterling and Wilson Renewable Energy has secured an order worth over Rs 550 crore to set up a solar plant in Rajasthan. The project will be set up in engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) mode, Sterling and Wilson Renewable Energy Ltd (SWREL) said in a regulatory filing on Sunday. The order is valued at over Rs 550 crore, the company said. "With this order win, SWREL has now achieved around Rs 900 crore of domestic order inflows in the second quarter of FY25. "This is in addition to the order inflow of Rs 2,170 crore seen in the first quarter, and we remain confident of further augmenting this order momentum due to a strong domestic bid pipeline being in place," Amit Jain, Global CEO of Sterling and Wilson Renewable Energy Group, said. *—PTI*

'Space tech revolutionising Indian fisheries'

NEW DELHI, 12 AUG

In a bid to highlight the transformative impact of space technologies on the Indian marine fisheries sector, the Union Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying is organising seminars and demonstrations across coastal states and Union territories. The initiative comes ahead of National Space Day, commemorated on 23 August. Space technologies are already playing a crucial role in enhancing fisheries management and development, the ministry said in a statement. Space technologies like Satellite Remote Sensing utilise Oceansat and INSAT systems to identify potential fishing grounds and monitor ocean health. Earth Observations technology employs INSAT, Oceansat, and SAR satellites to track ocean currents, waves, and extreme weather for optimised fishing operations. *—PTI*

Sensex, Nifty end flat amid Hindenburg allegations

30-share Sensex closed lower by 56.99 points

MUMBAI, 12 AUG

Stock markets closed marginally lower in a highly volatile trade on Monday as investors turned cautious about the potential disruptions from the US short-seller Hindenburg Research report on SEBI chairperson and her husband's undisclosed investments in obscure offshore funds in Bermuda and Mauritius.

Recovering from early lows, the 30-share Sensex closed lower by 56.99 points or 0.07 per cent to settle at 79,648.92. The index had declined by 479.78 points or 0.60 per cent to a low of 79,226.13 in morning trade. The benchmark later staged a sharp recovery climbing 400.27 points or 0.50 per cent to 80,106.18. But at the fag-end, the BSE benchmark slipped into the negative territory to close lower.

The index declined by 479.78 points PHOTO: PTI

The NSE Nifty dipped 20.50 points or 0.08 per cent to 24,347. Intra-day, it hit a low of 24,212.10 and a high of 24,472.80. "The Indian market concluded relatively flat, with its initial path being eclipsed by the continuation of the Adani-Hindenburg-SEBI saga. However, the market tried to brush away these noises, taking positive cues from global markets," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

From 30 Sensex firms, Adani Ports, NTPC, Power Grid, State Bank of India, Nestle, Mahindra & Mahindra, Reliance Industries and Tata Consultancy Services were the biggest laggards. Axis Bank, Infosys, JSW Steel, Tata Motors, HDFC Bank and Kotak Mahindra Bank were among the gainers from the blue-chip pack.

Hindenburg Research on Saturday alleged that SEBI chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch and her husband had undisclosed investments in obscure offshore funds in Bermuda and Mauritius, the same entities allegedly used by Vinod Adani - the elder brother of group chairman Gautam Adani - to round-trip funds and inflate stock prices. *—PTI*

Adani Group stocks plunge up to 17%

NEW DELHI, 12 AUG

PHOTO: PTI

- Adani Ports dipped 2.02 per cent, Adani Enterprises declined 1.09 per cent, ACC (0.97 per cent) and Adani Power (0.65 per cent)

Shares of eight of the ten Adani group firms ended lower on Monday after facing severe drubbing during the morning trade as the US short-seller Hindenburg Research alleged that Sebi chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch and her husband had undisclosed investments in obscure offshore funds in Bermuda and Mauritius, the same entities allegedly used by Vinod Adani to round-trip funds and inflate stock prices. The Adani group firms, however, managed to recover most of their sharp early declines. At close of trade, the stock of Adani Wilmar slumped 4.14 per cent, Adani Total Gas went lower by 3.88 per cent, Adani Energy Solutions dropped 3.70 per cent, NDTV fell by 3.08 per cent, Adani Ports dipped 2.02 per cent, Adani Enterprises declined 1.09 per cent, ACC (0.97 per cent) and Adani Power (0.65 per cent) on the BSE. During the early trade, shares of Adani Energy Solutions nosedived 17 per cent, Adani Total Gas tanked 13.39 per cent, NDTV plunged 11 per cent and Adani Power dropped 10.94 per cent. Stocks of Adani Green Energy had declined 6.96 per cent, Adani Wilmar slumped 6.49 per cent, Adani Enterprises tumbled 5.43 per cent, Adani Ports dived 4.95 per cent, Ambuja Cements skidded 2.53 per cent and ACC dipped 2.42 per cent. *—PTI*

Bharti to buy 24.5% stake in UK's largest BT broadband firm

NEW DELHI, 12 AUG

Telecom czar Sunil Bharti Mittal's conglomerate will buy a 24.5 per cent stake in Britain's largest broadband and mobile company, BT Group, worth about USD 4 billion.

Bharti Global, the international investment arm of Bharti Enterprises, will buy 9.99 per cent stake in BT Group from Patrick Drahi's Altice immediately and purchase the remainder after it had secured the necessary regulatory approvals, the firm said in a statement. It, however, did not disclose financial details but market watchers say that at BT's valuation of roughly USD 15 billion dollars, the deal could be in the ballpark of USD 4 billion range.

Bharti, India's second largest telecom operator with about 400 million subscribers, has had a relationship with BT previously as well. BT owned a 21 per cent stake in Bharti Airtel from 1997 to 2001. The company is neither keen on making an offer to acquire the whole of BT, nor is it seeking a board position. Altice, an investment conglomerate controlled by billionaire Drahi, is exiting BT as it struggles with high debt. It first took a stake in BT in 2021, acquiring a 12 per cent holding which it later increased to 24.5 per cent. BT's shares have fallen by about a third since Altice first became an investor. Bharti's investment in BT aims to support the commitment of Prime Minister Narendra Modi towards his vision in elevating and broadening the India-UK ties, the release said. It noted that during the recently concluded visit of UK Foreign Secretary, David Lammy to India, the UK-India Technology Security Initiative was announced to expand collaboration in critical and emerging technologies across priority sectors including telecom. *—PTI*

AUD 35 MILLION

REA India's revenue up 31% to ₹563 crore in FY' 2024

NEW DELHI, 12 AUG

PropTech startup REA India, which owns Housing.com platform, clocked a revenue of Rs 563 crore, up 31 per cent in the last fiscal ended June, helped by strong demand of residential properties, its CEO Dhruv Agarwala said.

REA India, which is part of Australia's publicly listed firm REA, is a full-stack real estate technology firm and owns two online classified advertisement platforms Housing.com and Makaan.com, as well as housing brokerage firm PropTiger.

Commenting on the performance of last fiscal, Agarwala said the company's revenue grew 31 per cent to Rs 563 crore in 2023-24 fiscal (July-June), from Rs 430 crore in the preceding year. He noted that the revenue of advertising platform Housing.com and property brokerage arm PropTiger increased by 25 per cent to 68 million australian dollar (AUD) from AUD 55 million.

REA India, which is part of Australia's publicly listed firm REA, is a full-stack real estate technology firm PHOTO: ANI

Its revenue from adjacency products and services like movers & packers by 46 per cent to AUD 35 million from AUD 24 million. Agarwala said the company's losses at EBIDTA (earning before interest, depreciation, tax and amortization) has reduced by around 9 per cent and the trend would continue even this fiscal year.

"FY'24 has been a year of significant growth and innovation for our company. *—PTI*

OLA ELECTRIC SHARES HIT 20% UPPER CIRCUIT

NEW DELHI, 12 AUG

Shares of Bhavish Aggarwal-led electric two-wheeler company Ola Electric Mobility Ltd surged 20 per cent to hit the upper circuit limit on Monday, extending their listing-day rally. The stock jumped 19.99 per cent to hit the highest trading permissible limit for the day at Rs 109.41 on the BSE. At the NSE, shares of the firm surged 20 per cent to hit the upper circuit limit of Rs 109.44.

The company's market valuation jumped Rs 8,040.94 crore to reach Rs 48,258.89 crore. On Friday, its listing day, the shares of Ola Electric Mobility Ltd had surged 20 per cent to hit the upper circuit limit, as against the issue price of Rs 76. The Rs 6,145-crore initial public offering of Ola Electric Mobility received 4.27 times subscription on the final day of bidding on Tuesday. The Initial Public Offering (IPO), the first by an electric vehicle maker, had a fresh issue of up to Rs 5,500 crore and an Offer-for-Sale of up to 8,49,41,997 equity shares. *—PTI*

T'gana seeks Korean investment in textile park

HYDERABAD, 12 AUG

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, who is on a visit to the US and South Korea to attract investments for the state, on Monday pitched the mega textile park in Warangal as an ideal destination for investments from Korean companies.

"Pitched the Mega Textile Park in #Warangal as an ideal destination for further investments from Korean textiles companies at a business roundtable organised by #KOFOTI (Korea Federation of Textile Industry)," he said in post on X by Telangana CMO.

The gathering, including Kihak Sung, Chairman,

PHOTO: PTI

Youngone, Soyoung Joo, Executive Vice-Chairman, KOFOTI, and other top leaders of 25 major textile companies, responded with amazing enthusiasm, he said.

"Expect to attract more investments for Warangal, and rest of Telangana in the Textile sector. My colleague @OffDSB and officials will put together a task force to follow up on all the opportunities for quick closures and action on the ground: @revanth_anumula," he said.

"We started our day with wide-ranging conversations with one of Korea's biggest industrial conglomerates - the LS Corp, which was formerly a part of the LG group. My team, including my ministerial colleague @OffDSB, and officials, met with Chairman of LS Group, Mr Koo Ja Eun, and his senior leadership," Revanth Reddy said in another post on X. *—PTI*

BHEL gets 1,600 MW thermal power project

NEW DELHI, 12 AUG

State-owned Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) on Monday said it has secured a 1,600 MW project from Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC).

The coal-based unit will be set up in the Koderma district of Jharkhand on an EPC (Engineering, Procurement, and Construction) basis, BHEL said in a statement.

The 2x800 MW Koderma Supercritical Thermal Power Project (STPP) has been awarded through International Competitive Bidding (ICB), it said. This is the first such project in terms of capacity for DVC, and will be set up adjacent to its existing 2x500 MW units set up by BHEL earlier, the statement said.

BHEL further said that it has a long-standing partnership with DVC and has installed over 80 per cent of the coal-based power stations of the utility in Jharkhand and West Bengal. The new project from DVC includes supply, erection and commissioning, along with civil works. The key equipment for the project will be supplied by BHEL's manufacturing units. *—PTI*

J&K GSDP expected to grow at 7.5% in 2024-25

SRINAGAR, 12 AUG

Jammu and Kashmir's GSDP is expected to grow at 7.5 per cent during the current fiscal, Lt Governor Manoj Sinha said on Monday.

"The GSDP (Gross State Domestic Product) for 2024-25 has been projected at Rs 2,63,399 crore (Rs 2.63 lakh crore), showing a growth of 7.5 per cent over the GSDP of 2023-24," Sinha told reporters.

Highlighting the salient features of the budget, he said the size of this fiscal's provisions was Rs 30,889 crore higher than the previous year.

"It is Rs 30,889 crore higher than the expenditure of 2023-24," he added.

Giving details, the lieutenant governor said the revenue receipt estimate for 2024-25 was Rs 98,719 crore and capital receipt estimate Rs 19,671 crore. Revenue expenditure for 2024-25 is pegged at Rs 81,486 crore. The administrative sector has got Rs 9,881.68 crore, social sector Rs 24,870.50 crore, infrastructure sector Rs 15,719.40 crore and the economic sector Rs 5,555.48 crore. *—PTI*

The partnership will provide delivery service providers access PHOTO: PTI

Amazon targets 10,000 EV fleet by 2025

MUMBAI, 12 AUG

Amazon India on Monday said that it has formed a strategic partnership with electric mobility firm Gentari for its EV deployment programme as it targets a fleet of 10,000 electric vehicles for last-mile deliveries by 2025.

Under the collaboration, Gentari Green Mobility Business will procure and deploy electric vehicles for the company in the next three years besides providing comprehensive fleet management services to the delivery service partners (DSPs) to ensure the seamless operation and upkeep of the EV fleet, Amazon India said.

The partnership will provide Delivery Service Providers (DSPs) access to more electric three-wheelers for Amazon deliveries, it added.

"We aim to empower our delivery service partners by providing them access to the right electric vehicles, end-to-end vehicle life cycle management services, as well as charging and parking facilities," said Abhinav Singh, VP (Operations) at Amazon India. The company deployed more than 7,200 EVs in India at the end of 2023, and it remains well on track to achieve its goal of deploying 10,000 EVs in the domestic market by 2025, he said. *—PTI*

NET DIRECT TAX COLLECTION GROWS 22 PC TO RS 6.93 LAKH CRORE

NEW DELHI, 12 AUG

Net direct tax collection grew 22.48 per cent to about Rs 6.93 lakh crore as of August 11 this fiscal, driven by personal income tax mop-up, government data showed on Monday.

The mop-up includes personal income tax collection of Rs 4.47 lakh crore and corporate tax collection of Rs 2.22 lakh crore. Securities Transaction Tax (STT) fetched Rs 21,599 crore, while other taxes (which include equalisation levy and gift tax) earned Rs 1,617 crore.

The high tax collections came on the back of a surge in I-T returns filed for income earned in 2023-24. The last date for filing ITRs by individuals and entities, who do not have to get their accounts audited was July 31.

A record 7.28 crore income tax returns (ITRs) were filed by July 31.

Refunds worth Rs 1.20 lakh crore were issued between April 1 to August 11, a growth of 33.49 per cent. On a gross basis, direct tax collection grew 24 per cent to Rs 8.13 lakh crore. The collection includes PIT (personal income tax) of Rs 4.82 lakh crore and corporate tax of Rs 3.08 lakh crore.

The government has budgeted to collect Rs 22.12 lakh crore in the current fiscal from direct taxes (personal income tax, corporate tax and other taxes), up 13 per cent over the previous fiscal. *—PTI*

SINCE 15 JULY

Diamond sector suicide helpline gets 1.6K calls

SURAT, 12 AUG

A suicide helpline number launched on July 15 by the Diamond Workers Union Gujarat (DWUG) has received more than 1,600 distress calls from those in the sector, a functionary associated with the initiative said on Monday.

Citing media reports, DWUG Vice President Bhavesh Tank said 65 diamond workers have committed suicide in Surat in the last 16 months, most of them taking the extreme step due to hardships caused by salary cuts and loss of jobs, a result of the slowdown in the industry.

Surat is among the premier centres of the sector, with about 90 per cent of the world's rough diamonds being cut and polished here by around 10 lakh workers employed in more than 2,500 units.

DWUG Vice President Bhavesh Tank said 65 diamond workers have committed suicide in Surat in the last 16 months PHOTO: REDIFF

Incidentally, at an event on Sunday, Lalji Patel, chairperson of Dharmanandan Diamonds, a diamond manufacturing company with a unit in Surat, announced Rs 15,000 financial assistance to each student and distributed cheques to needy families from the sector.

Amid a rise in suicide by diamond workers unable to bear the financial crunch, the Surat Diamond Workers Union recently launched a helpline number where several workers requested for assistance in paying their children's school and college fees, it said.

This is the first time in five decades that there has been a recession for two consecutive years, with the situation worsening in the last six months, they said. *—PTI*

Olympics conclude with spectacular ceremony

Tom Cruise transfers flag to LA for 2028 games

SAINT-DENIS, 12 AUG

Setting out to prove that topping Paris isn't mission impossible, Los Angeles rolled out a skydiving Tom Cruise, Grammy winner Billie Eilish and other stars on Sunday as it took over Olympic hosting duties for 2028 from the French capital, which closed out its 2024 Games just as they started — with joy and panache.

The closing ceremony capped two and a half extraordinary weeks of Olympic sports and emotion with a boisterous, star-studded show in France's national stadium, mixing unbridled celebration with a somber call for peace from IOC President Thomas Bach. Following in Paris' footsteps promises to be a challenge: It made spectacular use of its cityscape for its first Games in 100 years, with the Eiffel Tower and other iconic monuments becoming Olympic stars in their own right as they served as backdrops and venues for medal-winning feats.

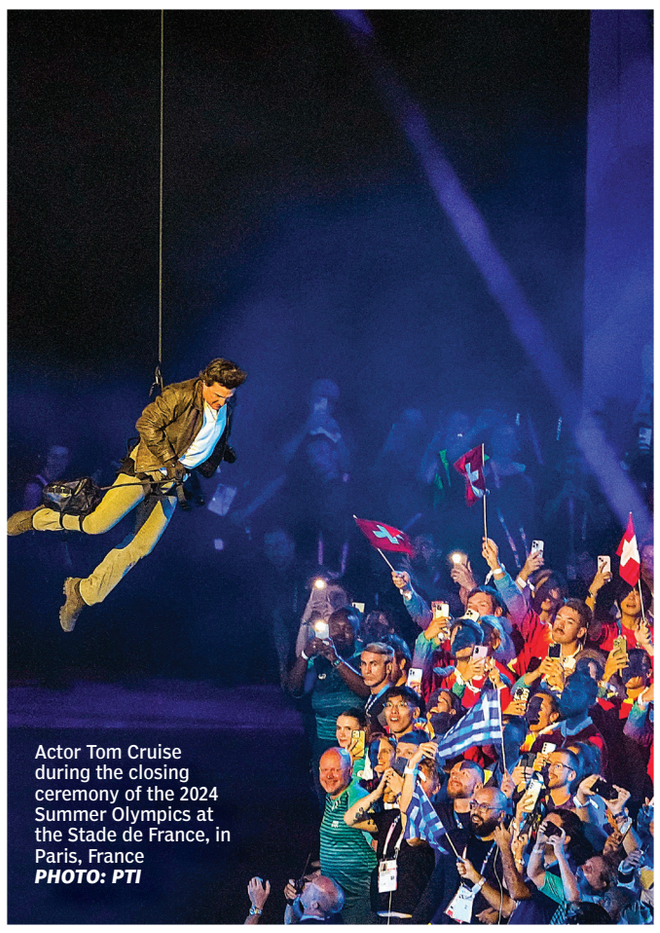
But the City of Angeles showed that it, too, has aces up its sleeves, like the City of Light. Cruise — in his Ethan Hunt persona — wowed by descending from the top of the stadium to electric guitar "Mission Impossible" riffs. Once his feet were back on the ground — and after shaking hands with enthralled athletes — he took the Olympic flag from star gymnast Simone Biles, fixed it to the back of a motorcycle and roared out of the arena.

In a prerecorded segment after being lowered on a rope live from the roof's giddy heights, Cruise drove his bike past the Eiffel Tower, onto a plane and then skydived over the Hollywood Hills. Three circles were added to the O's of the famed Hollywood sign to create five interlaced Olympic rings.

The thousands of athletes who danced and sang the night away cheered it — and the artistic show that celebrated Olympic themes, complete with firework flourishes.

Multiple time zones away, Eilish, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, rapper Snoop Dogg — wearing pants with the Olympic rings after being a popular mainstay at the Paris Games — along with his longtime collaborator Dr. Dre kept the party going with performances on Los Angeles' Venice Beach.

To spectators' loud chants of "Léon, Léon," Marchand then reappeared at the end of the show, blowing out the flame. Paris Games were over. —*AP*



Actor Tom Cruise during the closing ceremony of the 2024 Summer Olympics at the Stade de France, in Paris, France
PHOTO: PTI

Spectators watch a French performance during the closing ceremony of the 2024 Summer Olympics at the Stade de France, in Paris, France on Monday

AS IT WAS

LA STARS DESCEND ON PARIS TO WELCOME OLYMPICS

Grammy winner HER performs the American National flag 'Star Spangled Star'

Snoop Dogg, Billie Eilish and Dr Dre pose for a picture

Kevin Germanier wears Golden Record-inspired costume

Neeraj Chopra's homecoming delayed

NEW DELHI, 12 AUG

Star Indian javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra has left for Germany after winning a silver medal in the Paris Games to take medical advice regarding a possible surgery and to decide whether to feature in the upcoming Diamond League meetings, according to sources.

A family source told PTI that he has left for Germany and is unlikely to return to India for at least one month. In Paris, Indian Olympic Association sources also confirmed that Chopra has left for Germany. "Chopra has left for Germany and he will not return to India for another month and a half," a family source told PTI.

"I am not aware of the much of the details, but for sure he will consult a doctor there (Germany)," he added. After winning at the Paavo Nurmi Games in Finland in June, Chopra had said that he would consult doctors after the Paris Olympics to deal with his injury.

He had won the World Championships in 2023 while carrying the groin injury. Before the Paris Olympics this year, he took a break of more than one month due to adductor muscle niggle. The 26-year-old Chopra had earlier also consulted a doctor in Germany regarding his injury. He also had a short training stint in Saarbrucken in Germany last month before Olympics. —*PTI*

INDIA AWAITS VERDICT ON VINESH'S APPEAL

PARIS, 12 AUG

India's sports fraternity waited with bated breath as the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), having heard arguments of all parties, got ready to deliver its verdict on wrestler Vinesh Phogat's appeal against her disqualification at the Paris Olympics, on Tuesday.

Vinesh, who stormed into the final of the women's 50kg freestyle event including against wrestling royalty Yui Susaki of Japan last Tuesday, was debarred from the gold medal bout against eventual winner Sarah Hildebrandt of the United States as she was found 100gm above the prescribed limit in the customary morning weigh-in. —*PTI*

The Palestinian delegation receives a standing ovation at the Paris 2024 Olympics closing ceremony

A dance performance at the event

PHOTOS: PTI/X/AP

WORLD'S BIGGEST EVENT COMES TO AN END

The Games in Paris have officially drawn to a close, capping off 19 days of eye-popping spectacle. Here is everything you need to know

THIS WAS THE 33RD EDITION OF THE GAMES

Total footfall:
15.15 MILLION

Total expenditure:
$9 BILLION

Total countries:
206

Total athletes:
10,500

Total events:
329

Total sports:
32

Duration:
26
July-11 August

PRIZE MONEY

COUNTRY	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
Hong Kong	6,44,72,832	3,22,36,416	1,61,18,208
Singapore	6,25,42,005	3,13,12,977	15,64,514
Indonesia	2,51,84,700	1,25,92,350	50,36,940
Israel	2,27,50,179	1,81,32,984	1,13,33,115

Red Hot Chili Peppers band members perform

WHAT'S NEXT?

PARALYMPICS
Date: 28 August- 8 September
Host: France

2026 WINTER OLYMPIC
Date: 6 Feb - 22 Feb

2028 SUMMER OLYMPICS
Date: 14 July - 30 July
Host: USA

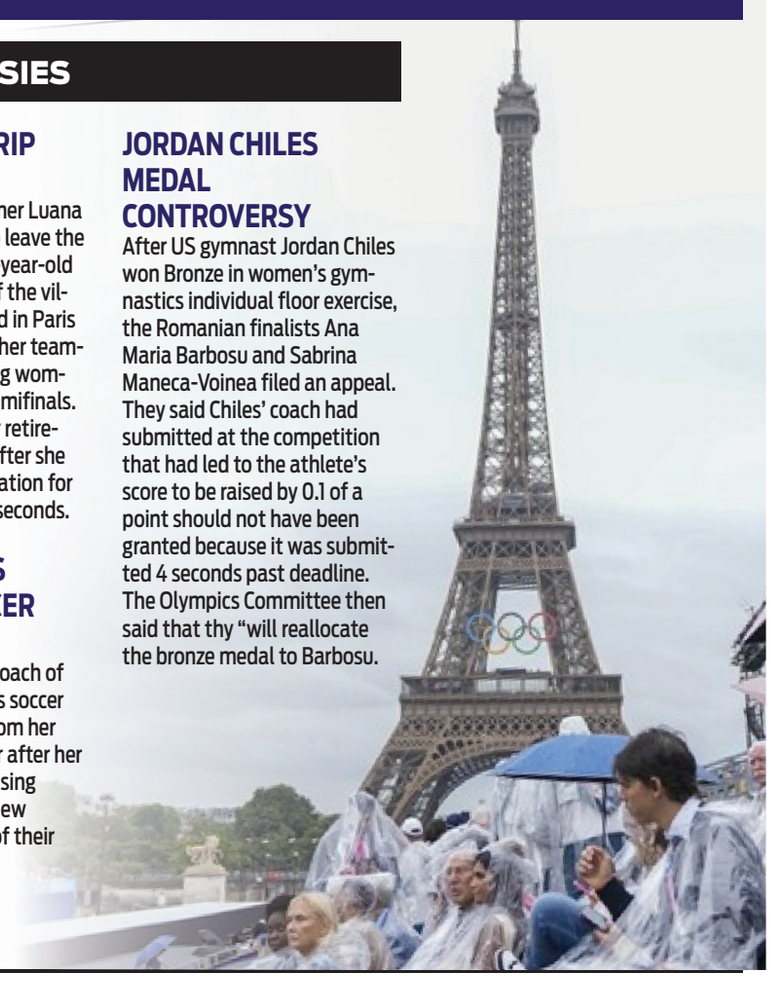
CONTROVERSIES

VINESH PHOGAT CONTROVERSY
The 29-year-old Vinesh was left heartbroken after she was disqualified ahead of her gold-medal bout in freestyle 50kg for being 100gm overweight in the morning weigh-in, crushing her Olympic dreams and prompting her to announce her retirement.

MACRON'S KISS
French President Emmanuel Macron landed in another controversy after he was caught kissing the Sports Minister Amélie Oudéa-Castéra During opening ceremony. The picture has gone viral on social media.

BOYCOTTING THE CLOSING CEREMONY
Slovakia's Deputy Prime Minister boycotted the closing ceremony over the controversial Last Supper parody during the opening of the games.

DISNEYLAND TRIP PAYS A PRICE
The Paraguay's swimmer Luana Alonso was ordered to leave the premises after the 20-year-old reportedly went out of the village to visit Disneyland in Paris instead of supporting her teammates on 27 July during women's 100m butterfly semifinals. Alonso announced her retirement from the sport after she missed out on qualification for the semifinal by 0.24 seconds.

CANADA BOOTS WOMEN'S SOCCER COACH
Bev Priestman, head coach of the Canadian women's soccer team, was removed from her post by Canada Soccer after her staff was accused of using drones to spy on the New Zealand team ahead of their group stage match.

JORDAN CHILES MEDAL CONTROVERSY
After US gymnast Jordan Chiles won Bronze in women's gymnastics individual floor exercise, the Romanian finalists Ana Maria Barbosu and Sabrina Maneca-Voinea filed an appeal. They said Chiles' coach had submitted at the competition that had led to the athlete's score to be raised by 0.1 of a point should not have been granted because it was submitted 4 seconds past deadline. The Olympics Committee then said that thy "will reallocate the bronze medal to Barbosu.